

THE MEMOIRS OF
QUEEN HORTENSE
VOLUME II



Portrait in oil

Belonging to Prince Napoleon

Hortense

THE MEMOIRS OF QUEEN HORTENSE

VOLUME II

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My mother was at Aix-les-Bains and urged me to join her there. She could not conceal her satisfaction at seeing me at last entirely free and independent for the first time in my life, thanks to my husband's departure. My physician, who began to be seriously alarmed about my chest, forbade my going to Plombières and thought that only sulphur springs could stop the progress of a disease which so many recent shocks had aggravated.

Switzerland was a country with which I was anxious to become acquainted, and Aix-en-Savoie lay so close to the frontier of this beautiful land that I could not resist the temptation to enter it.

I sent all my travelling carriages along the French road that leads through Geneva. I myself with half my household in the strictest incognito*—to avoid a scolding from the Emperor, who had not granted me permission to leave France—took the road that leads from Besançon, Pontarlier and Lausanne. I was so weak that two servants were obliged to carry me in a little specially constructed chair whenever the mountain road became too tiring.

By the time I reached Geneva I had already benefited somewhat from the pure mountain air and the beauties of the scenery, although I was very tired. My lodgings

* See Note p 259

were outside the town at the little village inn of Le Sècheron I retired to my room to take a little rest, but in vain, so I joined my ladies-in-waiting in the garden of a Monsieur Heutsch which adjoined that of the inn. My ladies were talking with several unknown gentlemen who, having seen that they were foreigners, were describing the surrounding country to them. When I appeared, attention turned on me. One of the gentlemen, a kind, obliging man, looked at me closely and seeing how ill I looked he at once began to speak of the beneficial effects of the Swiss climate. He assured me it would do me good. He owed his own life partly to the excellence of the climate, partly to the care of one of his friends, a skilful physician, whom he pointed out to me strolling about a short distance away, and then, without waiting for my reply, he hurried off and returned with the doctor. The latter approached me saying, "How long have you been ill? What is the trouble?" I thought he was asking, "What are the sorrows which are shortening your days?" for it was sorrows which lay at the root of my illness, and to speak of the one was to remind me of the other. The only answer I could make was to burst into tears. The interest of the stranger who had brought the doctor to me was increased by the sight of my distress. Deeply moved, he took my arm, offered to look after me, urged me to divert my thoughts, pointed out the beauties of the lake, and seeing Monsieur Heutsch* standing in the doorway of his home he introduced me as a foreign visitor, without consulting me, and made me go into the house, where that day there happened to be a fairly numerous gathering. I made no effort to resist. I was too moved to be able to speak. The doctor did not take his eyes off me, so great was his desire to discover the cause of my illness. My ladies followed us silently, not venturing to reveal my incognito. In order to hide my too visible emotion as I entered the drawing-room, I bowed and, walking over to the piano, took up a piece of music. "It is a new song," said my host, "it was written by the Queen of Holland. My niece sings it very well." She proceeded to do so, and her quiet assurance made me certain that she had no idea the

* See Note p. 259

author was beside her. I was about to withdraw and return to the inn when we heard strains of music on the lake. I was obliged to yield again to the insistence of my host and the gentleman who had introduced me and go to meet the new arrivals. I cannot say whether it was annoyance, fatigue, or the effect of the music on my nerves, but my tears continued to fall abundantly. The more ashamed I was of them the less was I able to stop their flow. The new arrivals, who had come from Geneva, left their boat and, one of them having doubtless recognized me, people began to whisper to one another. Finally my name reached the ears of the gentleman who would not leave me and who, in his desire to make himself agreeable, had offered me a picnic for the next day, to be followed by a boating party and all the pleasures one may enjoy on the lake of Geneva. All at once he released my arm. His embarrassed countenance, his evident fear of having displeased me, showed me that my incognito had been betrayed. But before all the company had time to be certain of my identity, I contrived to have a moment's liberty, and hastened back to my hotel, leaving the merry band to go on to Geneva.

In the evening I was so ill that I was obliged to send for the same doctor who a few hours before had been asked to diagnose my case. I did not need to confess my identity, for I had been obliged to give my name in order that the gates of the town should be opened for the man sent to bring the doctor. The next morning, feeling a little better, I left at noon to meet my mother.

I had just passed the first posting-house when, some distance off, I caught sight of two horsemen dashing towards us at full speed. When our minds are full of some particular person we fancy that we see him everywhere, and if we do happen to meet him we believe our intuition has been correct. That was why at the sight of one of the approaching horsemen I exclaimed, "I was right, it is he." My heart beat violently, but I hid my emotion and displayed only surprise when Monsieur de Flahaut and Monsieur de Pourtalès, my mother's equerry, appeared beside my carriage. The former was staying at Aix, taking the waters there on account of his health, the

latter accompanied my mother. She had sent them ahead to meet me and was waiting for me a little farther on. A few moments later I was in her arms. How marvellous it is to pass from agitation to calm, from the most fearful loneliness to tender affection ! But to bear either grief or happiness one must have strength and mine was exhausted. If a storm came up my nerves created a thousand phantoms. The sight of Monsieur de Flahaut, who spent his days at my mother's, roused an emotion which became more and more difficult to hide and which was too intense for my enfeebled health. For the first time since I knew that I loved him I now saw him constantly. If he devoted himself to me I felt extremely embarrassed. If he was gay and attentive to the young ladies who were with us an indescribable bitterness and shame filled my heart. I have always looked back on this quiet month as the happiest I ever knew. But how could I enjoy it amid inner conflicts that my feeble health could not support and which absorbed all my being ?

The account of the danger which my mother had been in on the Lac du Bourget the day before I arrived made me tremble. She had left Aix to visit the Abbey of Hautecombe. The weather had been magnificent when she started, but when she was returning a storm surprised her while on the Lake. The garlands and all the hangings with which the vessel had been adorned in her honour added to her danger, as they offered more resistance to the wind. It seemed certain that the boat would capsize. Monsieur de Flahaut and Monsieur de Pourtalès had already grasped her hands, ready to rescue her in case the ship went down. All the surrounding villagers, aware of the Empress's danger, had gathered on the shores and awaited to come to her aid. But by their great courage and skill the crew managed to weather the storm. The boat came safe to port and a kind Providence spared me the horrible misfortune which had threatened me.

Monsieur de Flahaut's very brief leave of absence expired. He went back to Paris. My mother made little trip to Switzerland, while I remained alone at Aix. The waters were so excellent for my chest and so good for

my general health that, had it not been for my children, I should have still further prolonged my stay.

The Emperor wrote to me to come back to Paris to rejoin my children. My mother, with whom I was staying* at Geneva, was very grieved to see me go. She was afraid that the Emperor might oblige her to live out of France, for he never wrote to her, and though Prégny, the house she had bought on the shores of the lake, was very attractive, nothing could compensate her for the loss of her own country and her beloved Malmaison. Several letters from certain persons who always want to meddle in other people's affairs, advised her to settle in Italy near her son. She asked me to sound the Emperor and find out what his wishes were. For the first time the thought occurred to her that she was perhaps an embarrassment and might be forsaken, and her heart was wrung to a degree that it is difficult to express.

I arrived at Fontainebleau, where all the Court had assembled. My children were waiting for me there. On the evening of my arrival the Emperor came to see me with the Empress. He showed her to me with an air of satisfaction. "Look at her figure," he said, "if it is a girl it will be a little wife for your son Napoleon, for *she* must not go out of France or marry outside the family." Naturally, we could not speak of my mother that evening. I asked him to receive me the following morning. When I talked with him, I felt how pleased he would be if my mother of her own accord decided to live near her son in Italy.

"I am obliged to think of my wife's happiness," he said to me. "Things have not developed as I hoped they would. She is alarmed by your mother's attractiveness and the hold that people know she has on me. I know this for a fact. Recently I wished to go out driving with my wife to Malmaison. I do not know whether she thought your mother was there, but she began to cry and I was obliged to turn round and go somewhere else. However, no matter what happens, I will never oblige the Empress Joséphine to do anything she does not want to do. I shall always remember the sacrifice she has made for me.

* See Note p 259
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If she wishes to settle at Rome I will have her appointed governor of the city At Brussels she could hold a brilliant court and at the same time do good to the country It would be still better and more suitable if she were to go and live with her son and grandchildren But write to tell her that if she prefers to return to Malmaison I shall do nothing to prevent her "

I told the Emperor that this was assuredly her only wish and my mother arrived shortly afterwards A little later I gave the Emperor a message from her to the effect that having been his wife and Empress of the French she had no ambition to bear any other title, that all she desired was the right to live and die in her country, surrounded by her friends

Since my return from Aix the Emperor had made a point of treating me with special favour Sometimes he would say to me "Come and see my wife. Sketch with her Play the piano and sing with her She would be delighted for you to do so and does not venture to ask you herself" I was too familiar with Court etiquette not to know that if the Empress really had this wish it was for her to express it Moreover, it was neither natural nor fitting for me to attempt to become intimate with her The result was that she and I always remained on good terms because I never tried to force myself upon her Like everyone else, I called in the evening and she always paid more attention to me than she did to my sisters-in-law Sometimes she even spoke to me about quite intimate matters One day, for instance, she told me how, when her marriage had been decided on, Monsieur de Metternich, in accordance with the instructions of the Emperor of Austria, wished to tell her about the different persons with whom she was to live He said that the Princess Pauline was the most beautiful person in the world, the Queen of Naples the wittiest, but that the Queen of Holland was the only one of whom she could really make a friend I was flattered to hear of this distinction in my favour, and especially that she should tell me so herself On all occasions I let her see that I was attached to her and she constantly showed her interest in me But her only close friend remained her lady-in-

waiting, the Duchesse de Montebello, for whom she had a sort of adoration which seemed strange to many people but which was easy to understand by anyone who can read the secrets of the heart. A princess is surrounded by homage and attentions from her birth. Everyone seeks her company, studies her tastes, tries to anticipate her smallest wish. She is accustomed to treat everyone on the same footing, everyone is alike to her, pleases her or wearies her equally, because all behave in exactly the same way. But if a person with whom she is constantly in contact appears to have outside interests, pleasures other than those in which she shares, then the princess (like coquettes who, always sure of pleasing, only notice those who pay them no attention) will be surprised and hurt at this unlooked for novelty. A woman whose one wish is to leave the Court is not likely to be either a flatterer or an intriguer. The wish to recapture this rebel, to subjugate her, occupies the mind of the princess as much as a serious affection might do, and sometimes it creates such a feeling. This was the situation between the Empress and the Duchesse de Montebello.

The latter disliked life at Court. Since the death of her husband, the education of her children, home life and the company of a few friends were enough to make her happy, and far from seeking to hide the regret her prominent position caused her, she seemed to take pride in showing it. And so if she were absent for a moment the Empress would send her little notes. She could not do without her, and the Duchess's friends were the only French people the Empress really knew, although she never saw them. She knew everything they did. On New Year's Day her one thought was to choose pretty presents for the Duchess's children. Madame de Montesquieu, the governess of the King of Rome, was jealous on his account. But the most extraordinary thing of all was the slanderous rumour that never had the least foundation in fact, that the Emperor was too fond of the Duchess. On the contrary, they disliked one another, and it needed all the Emperor's strong sense of justice not to resent the influence another person wielded over his wife's mind. I have several

times heard him say to the Empress "You are making a great mistake if you think that the Duchess cares for you. The only persons she cares about are herself and her children. You are silly to become so attached to her." Nevertheless, he always put up with her, always treated her politely and did everything he could to have her treated with the deference due to a woman of high moral character and a friend of his wife.

In spite of all her qualities, it must be admitted that the Duchesse de Montebello was not the right person for her post as chief lady-in-waiting, perhaps because she did not take the trouble to be so. For instance, she never enquired as to the position and rank of the persons presented to the Empress nor what ought to be done or avoided in reference to them. The Empress, a foreigner, entirely ignorant of the environment in which she found herself, often made mistakes, natural and excusable enough in a commoner, but which are not forgiven in an Empress. How often, for instance, did she make enquiries about a husband to a wife who had just lost him on the field of battle, and who, with tears in her eyes, was obliged herself to impart the news for which she had expected consolation.

The members of the Emperor's family were surprised to find that they were kept at a distance by the Empress. My mother had been ready to receive them at all hours and always received them affectionately. It used to be she who was constantly asked to say something or secure some favour of which one had not ventured to speak personally. How different things were now! No more intimacy, far more ceremony. Even Madame Mère herself felt the change.

The pretty face and winning ways of the Princess Pauline had made her the spoiled child of the family. She was allowed to do anything. Even the Emperor, though he often scolded her, let her do things for which anyone else would have been severely reprimanded. Everyone said "She is only a child." And what a pretty child she was! It never seemed to matter what she said, and I cannot understand why I should have taken so much to heart the way she spoke to me when I came back to Court.

She reproached me sharply for having been the cause of my children losing the throne of Holland, of my husband's exile and all his misfortunes. I was dreadfully distressed at the picture of all the harm imputed to me. My reason, and conscience both assured me that I was innocent, yet, too weak to be able to refute these false accusations, my present grief was increased by the memories that I revived to justify myself. Princess Pauline, who was entirely absorbed in fashions and amusements, must have been surprised and perhaps pleased at having, for once in her life, made such a deep impression about something serious.

The fact is that the whole family was, I believe, sorry to see me return to Court. I can understand jealousy when one's affections are involved, but not when it is merely a question of precedence, of a few more or less becoming dresses, of some more or less marked social success. The joy the Emperor's family had felt on my departure for Holland gave the measure of their regret at my return. Especially as they could now no longer make it a crime for me to be there, as my children's future was once more rooted in France.

The Emperor, quite unintentionally, it is true, had done everything possible to inflame the jealousy his family felt towards us. He had for a long time treated me with special favour because, as he meant to adopt the son, he wished the mother to be especially respected. How often did Caroline come and say to me : "I entertain just as you do in every way. I always act as you do, because I consult you beforehand, and yet the Emperor always holds you up to me as an example as though you alone knew how to behave. Then, too, he is always saying to Murat and to his brothers : 'Look at Eugène !' How can he expect us to get on together ?"

Since then people so often told the Emperor that he favoured us at the expense of his own family, that he was obliged to adopt the opposite course.

Madame Mère, who was anxious about the fate of her son Louis, thought of sending to him Monsieur Decazes, who on his return to France from Holland, and after I had refused to make him my chief secretary, had resumed

his former post as magistrate in Paris. He had remained in touch with my husband. The Emperor's family thought that a letter from me might persuade my husband to return. I wrote it, and, strange to relate, the more I dreaded this return, the more I tried to bring it about in order to exculpate myself in my own eyes for not wanting a thing that might make another person happy. So I made M. Decazes set out in my best carriage, thinking it might be used by the King. I paid the expenses of the several journeys he made into Austria, and when some months later I heard that my husband refused to come back to France, I was very glad not to be in any way to blame for his decision.

The Emperor had given the King an allowance of 2,000,000 francs,* of which 500,000 came from a forest near Saint Leu, a domain destined for my second son. The rest was paid by the Treasury. When the King refused to accept this sum the Emperor had it paid to me.* I paid all my husband's debts* and gave pensions to all who had served him devotedly, even those of whom I had often had cause of complaint. Monsieur Decazes, when he returned, told me that my husband had given him a letter for me of which the Emperor had taken possession, as he had of several others addressed to the Senate, to the Secretary of the Imperial family, etc. And in truth, that same evening the Emperor, who had looked very grave all through the concert, and next to whom I was seated, said to me: "Your husband is mad. He has written to all the French authorities. He has written to you too a letter you will never receive. I have kept it. He wants to be somebody and forgets what he owes to France and to me. It would serve him right if I were to abandon his children." I could not understand what these abrupt sentences meant. The last one brought tears to my eyes. The Emperor noticed it. "Luckily, I am kind-hearted," he went on, "and people always count upon it. It is not the fault of those poor children. But they would deserve to be pitied if they had only their father to look after them." That was all I ever knew about the incident, and for a long time I kept wondering

* See Note p. 259.

what new grounds for complaint the King might have given the Emperor. It was not until 1814 that I saw in the *Gazette de Lausanne* the text of my husband's statement to the Senate and his prohibition for me to accept anything from the Emperor. He left to me his estate at Saint-Leu and all his private properties, which in France had consisted only of his house in Paris and the country place of Saint-Leu. The latter was charming, but brought in no revenue, and cost more than 30,000 francs a year to keep up.

The excursion to Fontainebleau was ended. My mother had come back to Malmaison, and I settled down in my home in Paris free, for the first time, to arrange my life in accordance with my tastes. My household had again been reorganized and established with all the dignity due to a person of my rank. The Emperor had given orders that this should be done and he was right. He wished the princes to spend all their income in order that this money should go back to the people whence it had come. Madame la Comtesse de Caulaincourt, mother of the Duc de Vicenza, was my chief lady-in-waiting. She had known me from my babyhood and was sincerely attached to me. I had kept the Dutch lady-in-waiting who had accompanied me back to France, as well as my former ladies-in-waiting and my French officers. Monsieur de Marmol was especially attached to my children and the Abbé Bertrand was my private chaplain. Madame de Broc had come to live with me. Her intense grief had given place to a gentle melancholy. Her affection for me seemed to fill her heart, and as I was equally fond of my friend, I thought only how I could find for her a man as exemplary as the husband she had lost. My eyes turned towards Monsieur de Pourtalès, the friend of Monsieur de Flahaut, for whom I had obtained the appointment of equerry to my mother. His fortune was immense and his disposition seemed charming, but time must pass and every precaution be taken to keep Adèle in ignorance of my plans.

An indoor life would have been the only one suited to my delicate health, but I was forced to go from time to time to see the Emperor of an evening, and every Sunday

to attend the family dinner he gave. My frequent drives to Malmaison tired me too, and so did the crowd of acquaintances who were always there and for whom I no longer had strength to make the slightest effort. The one thing I enjoyed was to stay at home. I avoided receptions, concerts and the theatre, but gathered about me a little group of people much spoken of, as every person in it was remarkable for charm, wit and reputation. I had made a very limited selection, and this was a source of some unpleasantness, for everyone who was received at Court felt entitled to a place on my list and this would have been difficult to me, whose aim was to secure a quiet, intimate circle and pleasant conversation.

In the morning I received no visitors. I would skate with Adèle, and dine either alone or with her. At eight in the evening, with my children near me, I received those persons whose names were written on my list. We had music, we played billiards. On a large round table* in the middle of the drawing-room everyone found the occupation that suited him. The ladies sewed or talked. Tea was served at ten o'clock, and often the stroke of midnight or even one o'clock stopped an animated discussion which would have lasted far into the night but for the delicate health of the hostess. I had at first great difficulty in persuading my officers not to remain standing as if under arms, but to take part in the charms of society. I wished my home to seem like a family gathering where good manners rule and where innocent amusement does not dispel the respectful attitude of the guests towards the hostess.

I had been so successful in forming a drawing-room such as I dreamed of and such as rarely exists, that it acquired a reputation that I was far from desiring. Though I gave receptions and balls, everyone wished for admission to my private parties. My sisters-in-law criticized me severely for allowing men to attend in ordinary dress coats. I even feared that the Emperor might not be pleased if he heard of it. But he only said to me one day, "I am told that you have opened a clearing house of wit (*bureau d'esprit*) at your home —" As people think it

* See Note p. 259.

necessary to talk about us," I replied, "I would as soon have that reputation as any other." No more was said.

I will not hide the fact that it was the wish to see the man I loved that made me receive so many others and take such pains to form an agreeable social circle. I never invited those whom I had informed once and for all that their name was on my list. They were free to come or not, as they chose.

Monsieur de Flahaut was not one of the least assiduous of my guests. As soon as he came into the room, no matter how easy the conversation I was having might be, it at once became difficult for me. My wits deserted me while he was present. I could not find a word to say. I knew that I should have to speak to him as to any other guest, but I could only do so by not looking at him and in a voice that did not sound natural. If he spoke I did not seem to hear. Yet not a syllable he said was lost on me. He complained that I was not as pleasant to him as to others. A smile informed him how welcome this reproach was to me, since it showed that I had been able to conceal the intensity of my feelings.

Monsieur de Flahaut wrote to me often. When I answered him I did not fear to express my affection. When he was absent I loved him a thousand times as well. But when he came back I was shy and embarrassed and my love was betrayed only by the efforts I made to stifle it. I do not know whether I did not appear to him to be utterly indifferent. But the persons who surrounded me could make no such mistake. They were too interested in the feelings of her on whom they were dependent not to discover the secret it was so difficult for her to keep. Dare I confess one of my faults, the most cruel that can afflict one? I was jealous with the concentrated jealousy that embitters the soul because it does not utter a word of complaint but consumes us the more for its silence. Monsieur de Flahaut was a man whose qualities and defects were of a nature to inspire such a feeling. He had a noble mien, an excellent mind, a quick wit and he was charming, even brilliant, sensitive but superficial, more anxious to be liked than longing to be loved. Completely

absorbed by the interest of the moment in charming any woman who seemed attracted by him, he frequently hurt the feelings of another whom he seemed to have forgotten. Eager though he was to see me, he was equally attracted by pleasures which separated us, and although there was not one he would not have sacrificed for my sake, there was not one from which he abstained. I persuaded him to amuse himself, ashamed of the secret impulse that prompted me to keep him. I was happy if he disobeyed me, alarmed if he obeyed too willingly, and was always asking myself what name I ought to give to my feeling if what he felt was love? In spite of my constant wish to see him again, I never once said to him "Shall I see you to-morrow?" I always waited for this expression to come from him, for I could only enjoy that which was offered to me spontaneously.

Many ladies seemed interested in Monsieur de Flahaut. I noticed this, and if he had spoken to me about it I should have had confidence in him. It was in vain that he assured me that he could never love another woman. I knew too well that with his disposition the day would come when he would no longer love me. But I wished him to tell me, to come to me and say, "I love another woman," sure that I could hold out my hand to the man who had pierced my heart, and even care for the woman who had taken his affection from me. If that was not love, it was a nobler sentiment. I sought to bring happiness to others. I took particular pains to leave those about me entirely free. I do not believe I ever refused a single request that might give someone pleasure. Yet in spite of this, I saw people frequently discontented. If anyone complained that I gave him too much to do I at once relieved him of a part of his duties. Then he would complain that I did not pay enough attention to him. People tried to show that I was exacting. Even the young girls I had with me and for whom I sought to find husbands accused me of being ungrateful and hard-hearted because I sent them away from me. How difficult it is for a princess to satisfy all the different personal ambitions that revolve about her!

Meanwhile, in spite of the little drawbacks inseparable

from a position of prominence, my household was as calm and as united as it could possibly be.

As for the Emperor's Court, it was serious and staid. Indeed, it lacked the refinement of courtesy and the polish characteristic of French society. A young man scarcely dared to speak to a young woman. He was afraid of being in the least attentive lest he should make himself conspicuous, and in truth it would have made a bad impression. The court was composed of so many different sets that the greatest discretion was necessary. The women in general were remarkable for their good bearing, for their dignity which even became rather rigid at times, and for their diffidence, which was never awkwardness. One never heard a loud voice and, if one did not find there the wit, ease and courtliness of a Sévigné or a La Fayette, nor those amusements which flourished in the days when everyone's sole desire was to make themselves agreeable, yet one discovered among the women an abundance of solid virtues, of maternal devotion and all the duties it involves, a willingness to sacrifice amusement for evenings spent in serious occupations and, in the conduct of business matters, an ability equal to that which the husband, away at the front, might have exercised had he been present. Moreover, all the arts, music, painting, song and dance were practised with talent. On the other hand, a woman who wrote verses or took part in politics would have been laughed at. This was in accordance with the Emperor's tastes. He held that the days when women had political influence must have been worthless. How often has he not said to my mother or me when we made some simple reflection or asked for a post for one of our *protégés*, "Come, come, we are getting ready to be ruled by a distaff and I shall have to do embroidery."

The Emperor was so severe as regards morality that he often sent young men to the front if they had shown too much attention to some married woman and risked disturbing her married life. He was especially jealous of the reputation of the ladies about the Court and of the wives of his generals. But he often did more harm than good to those he meant to protect, for people would gossip

openly as to the reasons for these sudden departures, and malice sometimes went so far as to say that he caused them for reasons of his own, a thing that was never true. Only it pleased him to frighten the woman who might have forgotten her duties for a moment. Once he said to me, "I am sure young men never dare look at you. They are afraid of me." And the thought pleased him.

It was of set purpose that the Emperor formed his Court to be severe rather than agreeable. One day when the Queen of Naples was telling my mother, the Empress, about an evening she had spent at a masked ball and all the witty things she had said there, the Emperor interrupted her impatiently, saying, "Once upon a time all that was amusing enough, now it is unseemly. A princess must set an example and behave in accordance with the rules of her day. The time for light, frivolous amusements has passed. Everything now must be serious and earnest."

Yet he was very lively sometimes when he was alone with us, especially in my mother's time. He would say all sorts of absurd things in her ear, and if he thought I could have overheard them and was embarrassed, he would laugh till tears came into his eyes. Once, for instance, when he was telling me about his former success with the ladies in my mother's presence, he concluded, "I never found a single one unkind."—"That is because you only paid court to the kind ones," I retorted, and he laughed, pinched my ear till I could have cried, and said to my mother, "Do you hear how your daughter treats me? She thinks I have always been old!"

I always saw him more serious with his new wife, but also more gentle and more anxious to please. He often urged her to enjoy the pleasures of her age. "If you like to dance," he said, "send for a band. Go and look at the masked balls. Visit the public buildings and manufactories."—"No," replied the Empress, "not unless you go with me."—"But I have no time. Go with Hortense. Your visit will give the Parisians pleasure."—"No, I would rather stay here." And that would be the end of it. If she kept him waiting for dinner, he would greet her with the words, "Ah! I see you have been making yourself

smart." Yet often for so trifling a matter as to have kept him waiting a few minutes he had been very cross with my mother.

One day, at one of the great receptions, when we were all covered with diamonds, after he had complimented us on our appearance, the Emperor looked at himself in the glass with his simple uniform of the Guard, and said, as he turned back, "One must think a lot of oneself to dress so simply." He charmed everyone who came near him when he gave rein to his good-nature. No one who saw him in those moods would have guessed he was the same man before whom all Europe trembled and whose greatness of mind impressed his family as much as it did any members of his Court. He never appeared otherwise than grave in public. People imitated him, for wherever he appeared he was the centre of attraction. Every man aspired to have a word addressed to him by the Emperor, and at receptions given by the Empress I have seen men decline to sit at a card-table with young and pretty women, preferring to remain standing, in the hope that the Emperor, who sometimes liked to chat with those who were in the drawing-room doing nothing, might speak to them.

When the Emperor was disposed to talk there was not an important subject on which he could not throw a new light. He never feared to express his political opinions. Once when surrounded by a number of persons attached to the Court he said, "I never thought of bringing the Bourbons back to the throne. They could not have made France happy for two reasons : the nation has injured them too much ever to trust them, and they would never have been able to satisfy the claims of those they brought back in their train. A new man was needed, a man free enough from the excesses of the Revolution to be able to unite all parties and strong enough to keep all the advantages the Revolution had won."

I believe that there never was a Court where morals were as pure as at that of the Emperor, yet few have ever been so calumniated. This is easily explained. On the one hand there were a few Republicans who, displeased at the

brilliant position held by many of their former associates, tried, by their sarcasms, to tarnish the lustre they had scorned. On the other, the old nobility, though delighted at the revival of the usages of a Court, were still disdainful of the new aristocracy and rather jealous of all its glory. As courtiers of the old régime they felt obliged to find excuses for the pleasure they took in the splendour of this new court. When they went to visit old relatives who had remained faithful to the old régime, they criticized and made fun of the new conditions, seeking at the expense of a few witticisms to secure forgiveness for their weakness in aspiring to share the new honours. How many efforts to secure a good post were explained by the words "*It was forced upon me*" So often was the phrase repeated that Monsieur de Talleyrand said "I have a list of people who are asking to be forced."

Then, too, the police system directed by the Duc de Rovigo did a great deal of harm to the reputation of the ladies about the Court. His predecessor, Fouché, injured no one but the Emperor when he obliged him to exile certain members of the Faubourg Saint-Germain from Paris. Whenever a complaint was made to Fouché he would pretend to know nothing about it, blaming the Emperor's impetuous temperament, or the fact that there were a hundred other branches of the police department which he could not superintend, and promising to seize a favourable moment to have the sentence of banishment lifted. And, indeed, he would after a while request the Emperor to rescind the order which he had himself asked for, thus taking all the credit to himself, and leaving all the odium to his master. By these means he made followers for himself, but he never troubled about drawing-room gossip or petty social intrigues.

The Duc de Rovigo, on the other hand, seemed entirely occupied in collecting the most trivial details of everyone's private life. He acted as his own detective, wished to be in the confidence of all the ladies, set them at loggerheads, told stories true and false, spent all his morning hours in making visits, and if, in the Bois de Boulogne, a woman surrounded by her children and her friends happened

to catch sight of the Duc de Rovigo while she was speaking to a man, she felt her reputation lost. All our ladies did their best to avoid him, declaring that he compromised them purposely in order to make people forget about the person (Madame du Cayla) to whom he was attached, and towards whom society was distinctly hostile.

The Duc de Rovigo may have had courage, good sense, devotion to his master, with other good qualities, but only the most firmly rooted virtue can withstand contact with that mass of corruption, the police department. What rights does one not claim for oneself when one assumes the right to pry into the secrets of others, and what can one respect if not the sanctity of family life? If the good of the State justifies such investigations to a certain point, at all events the high morality of the man charged to make them should reassure the public as to the purity of his intentions. His character should afford a guarantee to society for the power bestowed upon him. It was for these reasons that the Emperor, when he appointed Monsieur Lavallette Director of the Post Office, said to him, "I give you this place because you are the most honest man I know," and Monsieur Lavallette never caused the slightest uneasiness.

Savary, who had won esteem as the Emperor's aide-de-camp, did not meet with the same favour as minister. It was natural enough that the Emperor should wish to know what was going on at his Court, and especially what the members of his family were doing, but the minister had no right to communicate his suspicions or his discoveries to others. I, personally, never had any reason to complain of him. On the contrary, he only showed me consideration and esteem. But he did not like the Emperor's sisters, and he did them a vast amount of harm by relating a thousand incidents of their home life, which, whether they were true or false, no one had witnessed, but which everyone afterwards repeated.

So I persist in saying that, in spite of all the libels of which it was made the object, no Court has ever been more moral or more strict than that of the Emperor. There was no intimacy : everything was organized and formal,

and besides the Courts in the state apartments there was twice a week either a play or a concert given by the Empress in the small theatre of her own apartment. The assembly of the most brilliant talents could not warm the cold, ceremonious atmosphere, and these pleasures were so formal that they were wearisome. At my mother's house, on the contrary, in her exile at Malmaison, everything was gracious and cordial. Dignity did not prevent enjoyment. The young and gifted women whom she had gathered about her in addition to her ladies-in-waiting made the evenings delightful. People flocked to her though she lived so far out of town and had no more favours to bestow.

The manners of the men of that day, although less gracious and flattering than they are said to have been in earlier times, had unquestionably improved since the establishment of the Empire, for they were simple, sincere and polite. In the early days of the Consulate I had seen young Republicans holding their heads very high, and apparently unwilling to admit that anyone could be their superior. Since then I had seen young nobles who gave themselves disdainful airs, apparently unwilling to admit that anyone could be their equal. Both parties had now modified their attitude and were improved by doing so.

About this time I made my appearance at Écouen as *princesse protectrice* of the school. The institution was the result of a noble moment of enthusiasm on the part of the Emperor. The day after the battle of Austerlitz,* touched by the loss of so many brave men whose death had added to his own glory, he decreed, while still on the field of battle, that he would adopt the children of all those who had lost their lives on that famous occasion. On his return, while he was still hesitating as to how to put his decree into effect, on account of his opinion that girls should be brought up by their mothers, he sent for Madame Campan, consulted her and finally said, "I will not limit myself to providing an education for a small number of girls. I do not like little things, they are of no value. Saint-Cyr was only a flower-garland which the love of Louis XIV offered to Madame de Maintenon. Two hundred and fifty daughters

* See Note p. 260.

of nobles were nothing among eight thousand families of poor gentle-folk. I will educate four or five hundred girls or none, and I will reform public morals."

The execution of this plan was postponed, but after the battle of Friedland he wrote with his own hand and drew up a very complete set of instructions which have ever since been strictly observed in this institution. My reception at Écouen was a touching one. I was happy every time I visited this spot where so many young hearts were brought up to love me and where I again experienced the emotions of my childhood and that light-heartedness, that confidence in others, which life so soon effaces.

The time of the Empress's confinement drew near. The Grand Duke of Würzburg was in Paris. A page came one evening to fetch me because the Empress was feeling the first birth-pains. I hastened to the Tuileries. All the court had assembled there. In the Empress's room were the Emperor, Madame Mère, Madame la Comtesse de Montesquieu, the governess, Madame de Montebello, chief lady-in-waiting, Madame de Luçay, lady-of-the-wardrobe, Madame de Boubers, whom I had given the Emperor to be assistant governess to his children, Madame de Mesgrigny who had the same title, all the women, the doctors and *accoucheurs*. Two young *dames d'annonce* from Écouen remained in the little cabinet between the bedroom and the drawing-room in which were my brother, the Grand Duke of Würzburg, the Princess Pauline, the Queen of Spain and I. All the other drawing-rooms were filled with members of the court and other officials. The Emperor came in from time to time and told us how things were going. According to whether the pain was more or less acute he seemed more or less nervous. He was distressed that the labour should last so long and asked us whether this might not have unfortunate results for the mother or child. He did not dare entertain the hope of having a son. It was clear that he was trying to accept the contrary. Nevertheless, he enquired carefully if there were no signs by which one could tell in advance the sex of the child and all his questions betrayed his anxiety.

I was so tired that about four o'clock I accepted the offer of one of the *dames d'annonce* to let me use her room. I threw myself, fully dressed, on the bed and I told her I was to be called if she heard the Empress scream. During my sleep the pains had subsided. It was believed the delivery would not take place immediately and everyone was advised to go to rest. About seven o'clock the pains began again. The child presented itself badly. The *accoucheur* almost lost his mind when the Emperor calmly told him he should act as he would do in the case of a woman of the humblest class and, above all, to save the mother. The Emperor did not leave her side an instant. He held her in his arms and tried to encourage her, but he himself was so seriously shaken by the sight of his wife's suffering that he had a sort of nervous trembling for the rest of the day.

About eight o'clock in the morning my *dame d'annonce* dashed into the room where I was resting and told me, with the extremest agitation, that the Empress was emitting terrible cries. I hurried downstairs and found the Emperor leaving his wife's room. He was pale and hardly able to breathe.* "It is over," he said to me, "she is saved." He looked so miserable that I timidly asked him, "Is it a boy?"—"Yes," he replied with an effort.* On hearing this I embraced him, but he had such difficulty in breathing that he pushed me aside. "Ah," he said, "I cannot grasp all that happiness. The poor woman suffered dreadfully."

He left and went to give the order to have the cannon fired a hundred times. I entered the Empress's room. She was still on her truckle-bed and the *accoucheur* beside her. I went up to the midwife who held the child. It appeared to me to be strong and healthy. I next went over to the Empress and congratulated her. There were so many people in the room that I left. I found the Emperor still so upset by the anxiety which he had just experienced for his wife that, to master his painful emotion he looked very grave instead of showing delight. This unmoved appearance was in striking contrast to the enthusiasm shining on every other face. People were surprised not to read on his the calm content of happiness.

* See Note p. 260

especially at the moment when Fortune had heaped all her favours upon him. The greater her gifts the more gratitude he was expected to show. He was severely criticized : for people thought him unfeeling while, as a matter of fact, this was one of the occasions on which I saw him the most deeply moved. To forget all thoughts of ambition and the future, to remain only a fond husband at the moment when he became a happy father, surely this showed that the heart governed all other emotions. As for me, I admit that I was embarrassed by all the sympathetic and curious glances fixed upon me.

I had been moved by the Emperor's emotion without thinking that this birth set a distance between my sons and the throne. I had wished for his desire to be fulfilled, as a child hopes to see his father or his benefactor satisfied. The thought that my children might wear the crown of France had never occurred to me. At least, I had never been ambitious for them to do so, and if there was any sacrifice to be made I had made it on the day of the divorce. I therefore shared the Emperor's joy sincerely, but how awkward and embarrassed one becomes when one sees that people judge one's conduct in accordance with their own ideas !

The Emperor gave his son the title of King of Rome. He was baptized privately that same evening in the chapel. I was present, and two months later his public christening took place at Notre-Dame. The Emperor of Austria and King of Spain were godfathers. Madame Mère and the Queen of Naples godmothers. The Grand Duke of Würzburg represented the Emperor of Austria and I was to take the place of the Queen of Naples. When the Grand-Marshal Duroc came and announced this to me I refused. I felt that the Queen of Naples could find someone else to represent her, and I decided not to be present at this ceremony held in the church wherein lay the body of my son.*

The Emperor, to whom I had not explained my reasons, was much vexed by my refusal. He thought it extraordinary that I would not hold his son at the font. He believed I considered it beneath my dignity to act on behalf

* See Note p 260

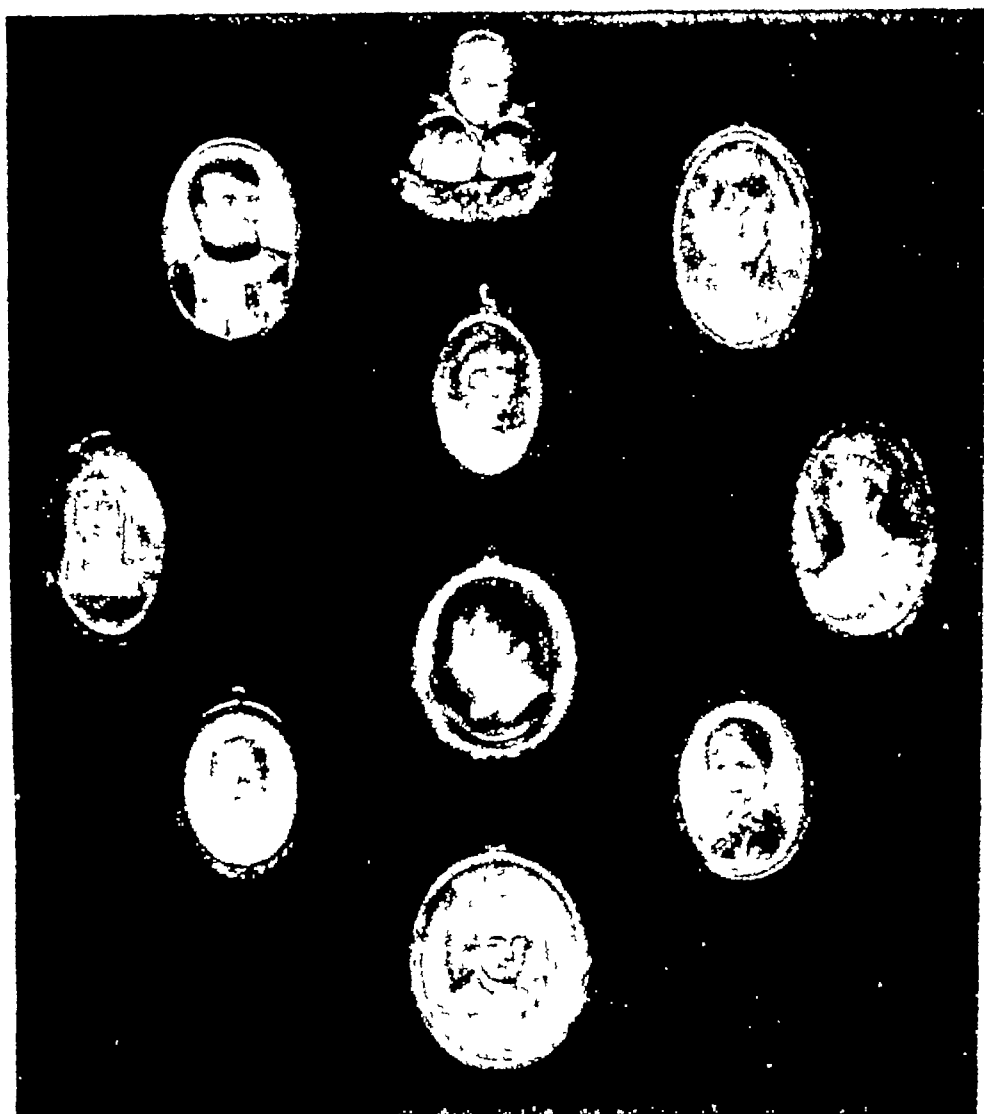
of someone else. The matter was discussed at a Cabinet meeting. It was pointed out that it would not be the first time one princess replaced another, that she could not refuse to do so and that my refusal would not be accepted. The evening before the ceremony I called on the Emperor just as he was retiring. I came to beg him not to insist on my presence at the ceremony, giving as excuse that I felt too ill. He turned away abruptly and said he had not meant to humiliate me when he did me the honour to ask me to carry his son. I returned home, oppressed in spirit and not knowing what course to take.

Since my son's death I had not had the courage to enter the church of Notre-Dame, where his body lay. It seemed, therefore, that I must make my first visit to this spot in the midst of a brilliant Court, covered with diamonds and with flowers, showing all the signs of joy, and treading, it may be, on the hallowed ground where his dearly-loved remains were lying. I did not feel I had the courage to do this. "I shall not be able to control my emotion," I told Adèle. "Ought I not to avoid making a scene in public?"

She reminded me of the Emperor's annoyance, pointing out that he would be angry with me without having understood my motives. Finally, in order to arrange everything, I decided to go at once to Notre-Dame, so that I might face the shock of a first impression alone, and might have more strength to overcome my feelings on the morrow. Adèle opposed my plan. She feared the emotion might be more than my feeble health could bear. "At least I shall be there alone with you," I exclaimed. "No one will intrude on my sad thoughts, and to-morrow I shall be able to hide them." It was then midnight.

Unable to endure the weight of my sorrow, I fell on my knees in front of the altar and poured forth torrents of tears. The old door-keeper, lantern in hand, looked at me with astonishment. He helped Adèle to support me to my carriage.

The next morning I re-entered the church in state. The clergy came to the main entrance to meet us. Standing next to the Empress, to whom an address was being made,



Belonging to Prince Napoleon

FAMILY MINIATURES BY QUEEN HORTENSE

From top to bottom and left to right,

The three children of the Queen (Princes Napoleon-Charles, Napoleon-Louis, and Louis-Napoleon), Napoleon I, King Louis, Queen Hortense, Madame Metc, Josephine the two youngest sons of the Queen (Princes Napoleon Louis and Louis-Napoleon) Prince Napoleon Charles, Prince Royal of Holland the King of Rome, General Alexandre de Beauharnais

I remembered how a few years before they had come to the same spot to meet the body of my poor child. My courage nearly failed me, but my previous visit had strengthened it, and no one noticed the strain I was under.

The celebrations in honour of the christening were magnificent. I attended those held at the Hôtel-de-Ville and at Saint-Cloud. At last, unable to endure all these ceremonies any longer, I left to take the waters at Aix-en-Savoie. The Emperor [at Saint-Cloud], during my absence, gave my children permission to live at the Pavillon d'Italie. Since the birth of the King of Rome they had continued to attend their uncle's luncheon as they had done previously. He always received them pleasantly, making them sit beside him, although there was hardly any room for them, as the repast was always served rapidly on a small loo-table. This was the hour when he saw people who were not received at Court, distinguished artists, his architects with whom he discussed the beautifying of Paris, and occasionally the actor, Talma, a fact which gave rise to the ridiculous report that the Emperor took lessons in diction from him.*

The Empress Joséphine was very anxious to see the King of Rome. Madame de Montesquieu took him one day to Bagatelle, where she went to meet them. She fondled him tenderly and could not refrain from weeping as she kissed him, and exclaimed, "Ah, dear child! some day perhaps you will know how much you cost me." The Emperor paid my mother a visit which pained the Empress Marie-Louise, though he thought that he had taken every precaution to prevent her hearing of it. Fearing to increase her uneasiness he did not return again.

The waters at Aix did me good. My brother came to see me there on his way back to Italy, and urged me to take advantage of being so near to make the acquaintance of his young family, but I was obliged to return to France without having carried out this pleasant plan.

Meanwhile the Emperor made a tour through Holland with the Empress. While there they saw my apartments, heard details regarding my domestic life and came back sympathizing with me more than ever.

* See Note p 260

I wished to find a tutor for my children. Monsieur de Las Cases and Monsieur de Sainte-Aulaire applied for the post. I spoke to the Emperor about the matter. He said to me, "France would not like to see the education of my nephews confided to a noble. One of the heroes of my army ought to bring up French princes." The choice seemed to me so difficult that it was postponed.

The Queen of Naples, who thought nothing of a journey of nine hundred miles, arrived in Paris unexpectedly, and before we had even heard of her departure from Naples. Certain difficulties had arisen between the Emperor and her husband who, though he had been created King of Naples by the Emperor, wished to be independent of him. She arrived in the hope of reconciling them. Murat had for a long time pretended to be deeply attached to the Emperor. He declared he could not leave him for more than twenty-four hours, he would have refused all the thrones in the world in order to be near his idol and had no other ambition, so he said, than to serve him. Caroline was always saying, 'The Emperor is a god to my husband. I ought to be jealous of such admiration!' And the Emperor himself, although he frequently said that a monarch should be feared during his lifetime and only loved after his death*, had been deceived by these demonstrations of affection on the part of Murat, whom he believed utterly devoted to his interests.

Murat was a very good fellow. He was dashingly brave, and possessed military talent together with a great desire to please and to be admired. He sought to have good manners and overdid them. One saw by his exaggerated attention to dress and his gallantry to the ladies that he wished to resemble the Villarceaux and the Sévigné of the days of Louis XIV. These were the models he had chosen, but the republican soldier could not be completely hidden and the mixture of two such opposite types would have been ridiculous if one had not been conscious of the honest, frank soldier, who was there to silence criticism. The result of it all was that despite his male and martial handsomeness he was a far less dangerous person than he hoped to be. He had an excellent heart and a mediocre mind,

and the rise of his fortunes had been too rapid not to have turned his head a little. Ambition, without the qualities which justify it, is a poor thing, and only really great men can from time to time turn it into a virtue. The ambition of Murat was born of his luck, and after being a distinguished general he became an undistinguished king. He had made me smile one day when, being still only Grand-Duc de Berg, he complained very much because the Emperor wished to annex the town of Wesel to France. "The Emperor had no right to take the place away from me," he protested. "It did not come to me from him. I obtained it through a treaty with the King of Prussia." And who was it who had made that treaty? Who had given him his duchy, and the town and everything else? Another time when the Emperor reproached him for extracting too much money from his duchy of Berg, Murat said with his slightly Gascon accent, "What do you mean, Sire? I spend my own on it!"

The Queen of Naples always knew how to protect her husband's interests with regard to the Emperor, but when she was alone with him her equal desire for power caused constant friction between them. "I am unhappier than you are," she said one day to me. "Louis cannot be more jealous or disagreeable than Murat. It is natural enough that I should wish to be the first person informed of what is going on in my kingdom. But what trouble it gives me! I am obliged to send my footman secretly to meet the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Chief of Police by appointment down by the harbour. If there is any news it is sent me immediately, but the fear the King inspires is so great that when next I see the Minister he is pale and trembling and he asks eagerly whether I have burned the paper that might endanger him. Tell me, can one submit to this sort of treatment?"

Far from arousing my compassion, she only showed me that the King was right in being suspicious of a Queen who bribed all the ministers in order to obtain secret information without his knowledge, and her life and mine seemed to me as different as our characters.

No one possesses to the same degree as Caroline the

art of charming by a graciousness that has something of the oriental dignity and seduction of the odalisque. True, a little claw emerged at times beneath the velvety touch of her caress, but a most carefully calculated abandon and the most gracious manner promptly cured the wound and captivated you anew. Proud, brave, persevering, passionate, inconsequent, the charms which attracted people to her could not mask her desire to secure all power, nor her jealousy of every success. Such was the Queen of Naples. We had for a long time been friendly when a trifling emulation separated us.

The Emperor decreed that there were to be two state balls given at Court, one in fancy dress, the other masked,* and that the Princesses were to be asked to get up two quadrilles. Caroline, who lived at the Tuileries, heard the news first and, instead of talking the matter over with me, at once drew up a list of the handsomest women and most popular men and sent out invitations to them to appear in her quadrille. I was at home in the evening with my ladies-in-waiting, the officers of my household, and a few young men in my set, when the Grand Marshal of the Palace appeared with the Emperor's invitation, which the Queen of Naples had been commissioned to send me the day before. I shrank from so much fatigue in my delicate health and wished to decline, but everyone protested against this decision. It was not the Queen of Naples who should do the honours of the Court of France, I was told. I ought not to give up my rank and, above all, I ought not to oppose the wishes of the Emperor. I allowed myself to be overruled, and accepted. The young men who happened to be present, such as Messieurs de Sainte-Aulaire, Germain, de Flahaut, de Canouville and several others, all asked to be included in my party and advised me to send word immediately to any other persons I wished to include, being convinced, so they said, that everyone would choose my quadrille in preference to that of the Queen of Naples. So I sent my chamberlain, who arrived at the same time as the Queen's cards of invitation. The written invitations were all refused, the verbal ones accepted. The Queen was greatly vexed and even complained to the

* See Note p. 260

Emperor, who paid no attention. The Court was large enough to allow both quadrilles to be composed of pretty women, but the best dancers were in mine and of course they were regretted elsewhere.

The Queen of Naples, together with Princess Pauline, had conceived the idea of an allegory representing the reunion of Rome and France. They had chosen the day of the costume ball and, much to my satisfaction, had left the masked ball, which was to take place a few days later, to me. The rivalry which sprang up between the performers in the two pageants was really amusing. People came to tell me with real vexation that they had found out that the other quadrille was full of graceful allusions to the glory of the Emperor and of France. I needed all my eloquence and tired my voice repeating that we were not asked to dance in order to pay compliments to the Emperor, that I knew that this would be the last thing that could please him, and that an allegory represented by people one recognizes, risks looking laughable when one hoped it would look sublime.

The theatre of the Tuileries was transformed into a ballroom for the occasion. The Emperor took his seat on a raised platform between the Empress and myself. The Court and important foreign visitors filled the hall and the boxes were given to the townspeople.

The beauty and the jewellery of the two princesses were dazzling. One of them represented Rome, the other France.* Their charming faces, their little helmets, their shields covered with diamonds and coloured stones sparkled gaily. The other women dressed as nymphs of the Tiber, the Hours, Iris, were all handsome and graceful, but the faces of the equerries and chamberlains whom one recognized, impersonating stars, Zephyrs and Apollos, aroused mirth. The pantomime did not seem appropriate either to the dignity of the dancers or to the place in which it was performed.

After the quadrille the Empress and I opened the ball with a French square-dance. Later other dances followed. The Emperor meanwhile went about speaking to everybody. He did not say a word about the allegory, but the next

* See Note p 261

evening when I called on him, the Queen of Naples being present also, he said to her in a rather impatient tone, "Where did you get the idea for your ballet? There was no sense in it. Rome has submitted to France, but is not happy about it. How could you dream of representing her as pleased and satisfied with her dependence? It was an absurd piece of flattery. I know, of course, that you only wished to look pretty and wear a handsome costume, but you could find other subjects and not try to set politics to dance-music." Then, turning to me, he added, "How about you? Are you too preparing some rubbish? Let me warn you that I don't like compliments."

I hastened to say that my masque had nothing to do either with politics or with him. "So much the better," said he, then, seeing the superiority he had given me over his sister, who after all had only been trying to please him, or perhaps because he was in the fault-finding vein and recalled the various grounds he had for complaint, he continued, as he prowled up and down the drawing-room, "Ah, these young women! They are harder to keep in order than a regiment. After all, I am not a bear. One can speak to me, consult me about what one is going to do. Not a bit of it! These ladies act as if nothing was of consequence. Yet in the position we occupy everything we do is important."

Then, speaking directly to me, he went on, "You, for example, what were you thinking of when you dressed up your son as a Polish lancer? Do you know I came near having war through your fault and that Kourakine (formerly Russian ambassador) has complained about it, and that it is already said that I intend to make your son King of Poland? And by what right did you give him a captain's epaulette? One must have fought to win it. You knew I made him resign his Dutch decorations because I do not want any child in France to wear medals he has not earned. My family must gain everything as I did, at the point of the sword. Well," he added more gently, "if to make your boy smart you must dress him in uniform, let him be a Red Lancer of the Dutch Guard. I will even be kind enough to let him wear a second lieutenant's

epaulette, which I hope he will earn in due time for himself." I had made no reply as long as the Emperor was speaking, for it was my mother who had had the Polish uniform made as a New Year's gift. The tailor had put on an epaulette and, as a matter of fact, neither I nor anyone else had noticed it.

I returned home well pleased at having stuck firmly to my own ideas about my pageant, because I saw that they were the same as the Emperor's. The costumes I had chosen were dazzling. Twenty-four ladies represented the priestesses of the Sun, they were all dressed in gold, twelve ladies and twelve gentlemen were Peruvians, with gold cloth and red plumes covered with diamonds and rubies. I as High Priestess was all in silver, white plumes and white diamonds. Eight ladies, also in silver with white plumes and ornaments of diamond and turquoise, surrounded me. All the dancers wore little black masks and went through their evolutions round the Sun, which was carried by the priestesses. Gardel had directed this ballet,* which was so much admired that even court etiquette could not prevent bursts of applause on the part of the spectators, and at supper the Emperor said to the Queen of Naples, "Ah ! it is better, much better than yours."

After our dance, as I was masked, I was overwhelmed with compliments that my disguise permitted people to make me. There was no platform nor throne. Everybody in the room was on the same level and all wore masks. A domino whom I recognized, said to me, "How dazzling you are. One cannot look at you."—"I should make a good prize, should I not, covered with all these diamonds ?"—"You know very well," he replied, "that the most beautiful diamond, the diamond above all price, is the one hidden under all the rest." The domino was the Emperor, and compliments from him were so rare that these flattered me greatly.

The Queen of Naples and Princess Pauline could not forgive me for having scored a success so generally admitted, even in a matter of such slight importance.

The Emperor enjoyed masked balls. He attended one or two a year, either at the house of the Lord Chancellor

* See Note p 261.

or at the Prince de Neufchâtel's. At first sight it seemed difficult to know what pleasure he found in them for he never spoke a word. I, however, could understand him, for, personally, I too liked them and I was not any more communicative than he. To be able to watch people without being noticed or followed is a novel sensation for people who are always being stared at, and when you are constantly surrounded with ceremony it is sometimes a pleasure to lose yourself in a crowd. As soon as he arrived at one of the balls he sent for me or the Queen of Naples, because he thought he would be less readily recognized if he were with a woman. We would walk about without speaking. Sometimes he would ask me "Who is that person?" I had no idea and I would try and find out. "How are you, handsome masquerader?" or "What is your name?" were the only phrases I could think of, and my mental effort stopped there. If people guessed who we were they would step aside with a deep bow. If not they would turn their back on us exclaiming, "How stupid they are!" which would amuse the Emperor as much as it did me. After an hour or two's stroll no more exciting, and usually spent in looking for the Empress, who was doing the same thing with the Duchesse de Montebello, we would go to supper with the Emperor, the Empress, and the prominent people who happened to be present, and everyone would recount the exploits he had performed in the ballroom. The only amusement the Emperor had had was that of not being recognized, or at least believing he was not recognized, and the people who have said he was delightful at balls, and that he mystified everyone, must have been actuated by their sense of humour.

CHAPTER XII

FROM THE CAMPAIGN IN RUSSIA TO THE FIRST ABDICATION (1812-1814)

The Carnival of 1812—Eugène in Paris—Napoleon's return from Russia—Eugène and the Grande Armée—The Retreat from Russia—Death of Madame de Broc at Aix-en-Savoie—Hopes of Peace—Napoleon sets out on the Campaign of France—Paris is threatened—March 28th—Departure of the Empress—Departure of the Queen—At Glatigny, Trianon and Rambouillet—News of the Emperor—The Empress Marie-Louise

NEVER had carnival been so brilliant as that of the winter of 1812. A succession of balls and receptions followed one another, as if to smother under their hubbub the silent preparations for the most formidable military expedition that had ever been undertaken. But so many men were called away that everyone's attention turned to the north.

France was contented. All ambitions were satisfied, all desires fulfilled. Then suddenly there was a general restlessness. The Emperor must have known of it, posted up as he was by his various police departments and the letters he received from members of all political parties. He alone read his secret reports* and burned them at once. He never either answered or blamed the writers, and by this means he came to know exactly what was being said. And if he sometimes yielded to the wisdom of some opinion, his far-seeing genius discarded everything that might turn him from his goal: the final defeat of England and the greatness of France. His plan was fixed. He presented it with so much art and such strong arguments that he carried every vote at his Cabinet Council. But the rest of France, unable to hear his voice, remained displeased at

* See Note p 261

a war which she did not desire. The Emperor persisted in looking upon it as the last effort needed to secure a final peace. He thought that French courage could achieve anything. And nothing stopped him.

My brother was called to Paris and did not disguise the state of public opinion and the exasperation of the countries through which he had passed so often. The Emperor did not say a word in reply. It was only in the Cabinet Council that he allowed explanations. Eugène spoke of this to me with grief and he grieved, too, for the cause of his summons to Paris*. The Emperor wished to leave him Regent of France during his absence. When he told my brother this he looked at him steadily. He could not doubt him, but he was trusting many things to him. Eugène replied that he would prefer to remain in command of his army corps. However, as a discontented nation needs new objects for its affections, and as the prospect of keeping Eugène in France had been received with too much pleasure, nothing more was said about the Regency.

The Emperor could not be jealous. No one was his equal. Yet the lesson of history, with which his clear-sighted mind was so familiar, had taught him all too well to sound men's motives and to distrust them. He had seen popularity arouse ambition even in the humblest. Consequently he was always looking for the most trustworthy man, and when he had raised him and advanced him in rank he still kept him dependent on him both for fortune and future advancement. If public opinion, which knows no law, became too favourable to anyone, the Emperor would take care to moderate his praise, to dole it out sparingly, for he knew the value of all that came from him and mistrusted the possible effects. If it be a mistake for a feeble sovereign not to regard ambitious greatness with distrust, a strong ruler is ill-advised not to have confidence in disinterested talent. It too often happens under the reign of a great man that he alone is everything, no one else counts and in the end he is surrounded by men whose initiative he has broken by his genius so that when he is obliged to let them act for them-

* See Note p. 261

selves, they fail him and, even without treachery, he is betrayed.

My brother was the one man the Emperor should have left in France. The fears I have just explained and the intrigues which exaggerated them deterred him. He placed the High Chancellor at the head of affairs and left for Russia [May 2nd, 1812].* The Empress accompanied him as far as Dresden, where there was an assembly of the sovereigns of Austria and Prussia. I saw my brother leave; I saw him whom I loved leave too, and my heart was heavy. We dreaded even victory, since even victory would smite many families anew; and after so much glory we aspired for nothing more than the happiness of Peace.

The extreme youth of my children forced me to bestow on them cares which were my only refuge from these sad thoughts. I had them always with me and I took them with me to the springs at Aix-la-Chapelle. My elder son had scarlet fever there,* and my broken nights and my fatigues lessened the good effect of the waters.

The Queen of Naples ruled over her dominions in the absence of the King, who was with the Emperor. The other princesses were at different health resorts.† I was obliged to return to be with the Empress Marie-Louise, who was thought to be too much alone. The life of all of us women was really a pitiful one. All France seemed to be in Russia. The nation had never been so widely separated from its defenders, and distance increased our fears; and now Fortune, tired at last of being always with us, turned against us and sent back to France only the wreckage of defeat, wounded, mutilated units, scattered and fugitive, but heroes still.

Our distress, our grief was as overwhelming as the disaster that had caused it. Everything was swathed in mourning. As dismayed as it was surprised at having met with a reverse, the French nation, which for so long submitted confidently to one man's will, now protested and seemed ready to play a part in shaping its own destiny.

As for the Emperor, his heart was broken, but his ability recognized the need to look ahead and check the

* See Note p. 261

† See Note p. 262.

effects of this great misfortune, so he reached Paris almost as soon as the bad news. His sudden appearance, his firm attitude restrained men's minds. No more murmuring was heard. Our humiliation was too great for lamentation and national pride forbade dwelling on the sacrifices incurred.

As soon as I heard of the Emperor's return I went to the Tuileries. He seemed to me tired and preoccupied, but not disheartened. I have often seen him lose his temper about trifles such as a door opened when it should have been shut or vice versa, a room too brightly or too dimly lighted. But never was he more completely master of his nerves than in times of difficulty or misfortune.

I enquired anxiously whether the disasters which had befallen the army had been as cruel as his despatches stated. He replied with a tone of repressed sorrow, 'I told the whole truth'—"But," I exclaimed, "we were not the only ones to suffer. Our enemies too must have suffered very heavily."—"No doubt," he answered, "but that does not console me."

I asked for news of my brother and he gave them rather coldly. This was why—

During the campaign the Duc de Rovigo had lacked details from the front. Paris was alarmed. He knew that my brother's secretary had sent news to his family by a despatch bearer who had just arrived from Russia, and he wished to know what these letters contained. He hastened to inquire. The letter that was shown him was full of praise of my brother's conduct. It mentioned among other things that his army corps had been the only one that offered any resistance at Malo-Jaroslavetz, where it had met with considerable success. The Emperor had highly commended these troops*. By order of the Duc de Rovigo this account was printed in full in the newspapers in order to reassure the Parisians. My mother had congratulated herself as she read of the gallantry of her son. As for me, I could not understand why the article did not appear in the official account of the battle, especially as the bulletin next day described the advantages won by my brother's army corps without mentioning his name*. The Duc de Rovigo was no less struck by this difference between

* See Note p. 262

the two accounts of the same action and, fearing that he would be accused of having himself been the author of this too-flattering praise, he wrote to the Emperor that my brother's secretary was solely responsible for the appearance of the letter in the newspaper. I heard from Monsieur Lavallette, and later from others, that the Emperor had been extremely put out by what he considered a manœuvre on our part, and remained under the impression so much that he said one day to Marshal Marmont : "I gave everyone their due, in spite of the compliments that some people had printed about themselves in the newspapers."

The Duc de Vicenza who, alone, had accompanied the Emperor from Vilna to Paris came to see me the day after his arrival. I spoke to him of my great anxiety about my brother, since he was still serving under the King of Naples. He gave me many details about our disasters and told me how greatly Eugène and Marshal Ney had distinguished themselves, especially by their presence of mind at a time when everybody was distraught. "But," he added, "I earnestly advise you to speak only of Marshal Ney and not to mention your brother." He said no more on this subject.

My sister-in-law, too, in a letter to the Emperor expressed her grief that her husband should still be left under the King of Naples. The Emperor speaking to me about this letter, said : "These young wives, if one heeded them, would be the ruin of their husbands."

I did not doubt, in view of all these incidents, that the Emperor, misled by some false report, doubted the loyalty and attachment of Eugène and judged him in a way unworthy of them both, but I knew that this state of things would not last long. So it turned out, for when Murat suddenly abandoned the army to return to Naples, and when the discouragement of the troops had reached its height, the Emperor turned to Eugène, who, by his tireless activity, managed to gather together the scattered fragments of the various units and form these wounded, disarmed and discouraged men into an army which could still hold in check both its enemies which were pursuing it and the others

which sprang up about them at every step. Never had a general found himself in a more critical and difficult situation. Eugène devoted himself to his task without any thought of fame or honours, but animated solely by a wish to fulfil his duty. The Emperor was forced to recognize the fact that he was deeply indebted to my brother, but he never showed it.

We were all hungering for details of the retreat in Russia and we felt both sorrowful and proud at hearing these tales of disaster and heroism.

My brother, by a skilful manœuvre and admirable presence of mind, succeeded in escaping silently by night with all his forces, thus deceiving the enemy who had completely surrounded him.* Marshal Ney made the same manœuvre but, less fortunate, lost his way in the snow. My brother, when he rejoined the Emperor, heard that the Marshal's army was lost or taken prisoner. The Emperor was inconsolable. "I would have given all the treasure I possess to avoid such a disaster," he exclaimed. My brother and his army corps undertook to save the situation. Although they had only just escaped from those same dangers, and were in the greatest need of rest, they set out, my brother leading in the direction in which they supposed the Marshal to be. Never was there a more touching scene than that when the two armies met. Never was the sight of the imperial eagles under which they had both fought received with more enthusiasm. Rescuers and rescued were equally overjoyed.

When the officers reached Paris after the vicissitudes they had undergone, I had the great joy of seeing Monsieur de Flahaut again. His conduct on active service had won general esteem. Such times of calamity show a man as he is with his qualities and weaknesses, and prove that he is either of less or greatly more than average value. Since egoism is our strongest sentiment, the man who sacrifices himself on behalf of others deserves to be honoured. Monsieur de Flahaut's civil-servant, who was old and ill, had remained at the foot of the mountain of Vilna. The Cossacks were close at hand. The route was crowded and slippery with ice. Monsieur de Flahaut had already



Miniature

Belonging to Prince Napoléon

PRINCE EUGENE

crossed the mountain once with the rest of the Emperor's staff when he heard that his servant was in danger of being left behind. He retraced his steps, took the man on his shoulders and after unheard of difficulties managed to rejoin the staff and instal the sick man in a sleigh. Such a spirit of self-sacrifice touched my heart but did not surprise me, coming from him whom I had chosen. The Emperor had frequently sent Monsieur de Flahaut on special missions and being satisfied with the way in which he performed them, appointed him his aide-de-camp. Thus I often met him at Court and therefore found the Tuileries less dull than they would have been otherwise. Is not any place embellished by the presence of those we love?

My brother's position was a constant source of anxiety both to my mother and to me. He had retired to Magdebourg, where he was reorganizing the army. The entire French cavalry had been practically wiped out in the Russian campaign. So as to impose upon the enemy my brother was obliged to place himself at the head of his staff and make even the simplest reconnaissances, and he exposed himself as though he were a mere recruit. It is always a delicate matter to advise a soldier to be careful of himself. To induce Eugène to listen to me I wrote appropriate verses and sent him good advice in songs.*

The Emperor went to the Trianon for a few days.* While there he had a fall from his horse which alarmed us greatly and obliged him to remain in bed. He sent for the Empress and me to dine at his bedside and said to me, "Well, well, Hortense, what a great piece of news it would have been for the English if I had been killed." I was surprised to hear him speak of the English. I had forgotten all about them, but they were the most serious problem of all, and the Emperor thought only of them while making his important plans.

Our misfortunes had been so cruel in Russia that I was convinced that they would decide the Emperor to give up those vast schemes which were the real motive of his campaigns and that so many victories had increased because they made their realization seem more possible. I felt sure he would sacrifice his dreams to obtain a peace as necessary

* See Note p 262

to France as to the rest of Europe. Perhaps one final success was still needed to convince our enemies that the Russian reverses had not crushed either his force or his genius, but I thought that a peace treaty (even should it be less brilliant than he could have made before that unfortunate campaign) would immediately follow his next military success. Naturally observant, and having always been interested in trying to guess the object of the Emperor's actions, I was so sure that one more battle would put an end to the hostilities that on the very day that I heard of the battle of Lutzen I ordered the new and elegant suite of bedroom furniture for which I had long since drawn out the design, and so I was very well inspired in a conversation that I had in Paris with the Prince of Schwarzenberg (the Austrian Ambassador) soon after the Emperor's return.

We never received foreign ambassadors except at our large receptions and in a ceremonious manner. The Emperor would not have allowed any intimacy with them. Consequently I was much surprised when one evening, as I was seated alone with my ladies, my footman announced the Prince of Schwarzenberg and the Count of Bubna. The latter had just arrived from Vienna on a mission to the Emperor. I do not know why our servants had admitted them, but there they were waiting at the door of my drawing room. I could not send them away, and received them as though unsurprised by their visit. I soon saw that they had something important to say to me. After a few platitudes, the Prince drew near to me and said in a low voice, "Madame, you who are so familiar with the Emperor's character, do you really think we can expect him to make peace? We desire it. Europe is worn out. But if the Emperor win a victory, will he not seek to regain all his advantages?" I replied that I was convinced that a victory was necessary to the Emperor in order to restore the confidence of his armies and efface the memory of our recent disasters and I added that I felt sure that the Emperor, too, felt the need of rest, essential to all Europe, that he was as great an administrator as a general, and that to assure the happiness of his subjects was a task worthy of his genius and one which he never

neglected, that as his strength had always consisted in realizing the aspirations of France, if she desired peace at the present time he would not depart from her wishes. "Have you not enough influence with him to convince him that peace is necessary?" asked the Prince.—"He obeys only the wish of the country, which becomes his own wish," I replied, "then, too, my youth and my position as an obedient daughter have always prevented me from expressing any opinion."—"Well!" he exclaimed, "in that case, perhaps Prince Eugène, who rules a great country, who knows what his subjects wish, will speak firmly to the Emperor and tell him the whole truth."—"My brother more than anyone else realizes how necessary peace has become. I will write to him. Rest assured, he will speak of it, but, I repeat, the Emperor sees too clearly to need any advice. One more victory and he will devote himself to insuring the prosperity of the peoples he rules over."

Monsieur de Bubna said very much the same thing to me as the Prince of Schwarzenberg. I replied to him in the same terms, and when they took their departure I was firmly convinced that peace was in the hands of the Emperor Napoleon and that he would make it. After his victories he did, in truth, desire it, but he hesitated, no doubt, to make too great sacrifices, and it may be that the enemy's conditions grew more severe as our forces grew weaker and theirs relatively stronger.*

Monsieur de Flahaut, the Emperor's aide-de-camp, was sent with instructions to the Viceroy. Before leaving he came to take my correspondence to my brother, and told me that the Emperor wished me to mention in my letter the particular satisfaction Eugène's conduct had given him.*

Eugène had concentrated his troops, those of the Emperor advanced and joined them at Lutzen where the famous battle so nobly retrieved our defeats. It was at the spot where Gustavus Adolphus had been killed and near the monument erected to his memory that Eugène met the Emperor, who dismounted and embraced him near the monument.

* See Note p 263.

By this victory to which his army corps had so largely contributed, my brother gathered the splendid fruit of all his labours

Before leaving for the front the Emperor had appointed the Empress regent with a council of advisers. We were all present when the oaths of office were taken *

I was at Aix-en-Savoie when I heard of the death of Marshal Duroc and the news affected me deeply. I had admired his firm, loyal character and his frank outspokenness even though the latter made him seem positively rude at times. He was a slave to his duties and scrupulously honest. Completely loyal to the interests of his master he never hesitated to express his personal opinions and he knew so well the intentions of the Emperor that he was frequently able to decide just how far certain orders were to be carried out. He even ventured at times to delay their execution when he felt that they were due to a sudden fit of temper. A sovereign would be more loved if he had only such servants as Duroc about him. They are true friends. The Emperor knew this and did everything he could to render the General's last moments less painful, and he sincerely regretted his death. The General's wife added to the sterling qualities of her husband a charming disposition. Her friendship and confidence enabled me to judge her merits as they deserved.

But she, who by her gifts and graces, was the ornament of the whole world, was soon to disappear, and by her loss to deal me one of the cruellest blows of my life.

Since her husband's death and my return from Holland, Adèle had not left me. Her life was entirely devoted to her friends and to the unfortunate. Often I have seen her leave a scene of pleasure and take off a brilliant court dress to carry help and comfort to the poorest of the poor. She had accompanied me to Aix. We went together one day to look at a waterfall. I crossed the stream first on an unsteady plank. As I turned, what a tragic spectacle met my eyes! Great God, could it be true! The body of my friend, swept away by the current, vanished beneath my very eyes. I saw again only her inanimate body. The officers of my household, my servants, tried to draw

* See Note p. 263.

me away from the tragic spot, but I would not leave. I could not give up hope. Yet I knew it was in vain. She had left us ! The thought of the future terrified me. No longer would I have her mind to support my fainting spirit, no more would I have her gentle nature to calm the tempestuous emotions of my own character. I accused Providence of treating me unjustly and I accused myself of having insisted too constantly on my own troubles to this incomparable friend, and of not having told her enough how dear she was to me. I felt that I had indeed been wrong to murmur in past days, since through all my troubles I had had her at my side.

When my mother heard the news she hastened to me. She divined the greatness of my sorrow and sent her chamberlain, Comte de Turpin, to enquire for my health. The Empress Marie-Louise also wrote me a letter sympathizing with me in my misfortune. Everyone shared my sorrow because everyone loved the person I mourned. But as for me, what consolation was there to be had ?

I founded a hospital at Aix, with sisters-of-charity to attend to the sick people. I sent the body of my poor friend to a chapel at Saint-Leu. Thus I kept her near me. I could not heal the pain of this dreadful loss, but I sought to assuage it by acts of charity. I felt that I was helping her by imitating her example.

On my return to Saint-Leu my mother brought me my children. Her affectionate care touched me, but could not console me. I went to Paris to see Adèle's father and her sisters, the Maréchale Ney and Madame Gamot. Our interview was heartrending. Madame Campan also was inconsolable, but it was I who had lost most.

Sea-baths were prescribed me for my health. I went to Dieppe with my children, from whom I could no longer bear to be separated. They were now all I cared for in life or, at least, the only beings who still needed me.

King Joseph having been obliged to abandon his Spanish kingdom, had retired to his country estate at Morte-fontaine. I made him a visit there. The Queen shared his retirement. She was admirable in her gentleness, kindness of heart and unselfishness. She shared my

indifference to rank and position and not more than I had she found them bring happiness. Her husband, whose character was totally unlike that of Louis, made her unhappy, but from quite different reasons. With no consideration for her, and solely interested in other women he neglected her and even was frequently rude to her. Her domestic sorrows reminded me of the life that I had led for so long.

The life of this woman, a slave and so unhappy, recalled me to myself. I remembered the advice of my friend when she reproached me for not appreciating more fully the blessings that I still possessed. "I believed that I was punished and I turned towards my children, those dearly loved beings who needed my care and my energy. 'At least,' I said, 'I will bring them up as I think best. I am free to spend my time as I see fit, I am able to weep undisturbed. Although life may not be happy at least it is no longer a torment. May Providence spare me and not punish me because I asked too much and because I remembered only the suffering it has inflicted on me.'"

The Emperor was at Dresden. We believed he could conclude negotiations there. Perhaps it was not in his power to do so. Perhaps he depended too much on the strength of his armies, on the resources of France, on the alliance with Austria, on his own good fortune. Kings on their thrones forgot who had placed them there, soldiers on the field went over to the enemy and the allies of yesterday became the enemies of to-day. The army, having been obliged to retire in the face of overwhelming numbers at Leipzig, withdrew to Mayence. Wherever the troops actually fought they were victorious but the only result was that they eventually found themselves on their native soil obliged to defend it against invasion. Hardly had they crossed the frontier when an epidemic broke out which carried off a large number of those whom war had spared.

The Emperor returned to Saint-Cloud. He seemed entirely absorbed by negotiations for the peace which France desired. Worn out by her latest efforts she was unwilling to make new ones. Her soldiers, exhausted by the disasters of the last two campaigns, began to wonder if

this was all the reward they could hope to attain. Adherents to the Republican form of government, who had been obliged to remain silent as long as the country was prosperous, now began to make themselves heard and to believe that their party could obtain concessions. The approach of the invader ought to have united all parties for the defence of the country under the only man who was able to save it still. But people remembered only how heavily this man's will had weighed in the balance of their destiny for many years. They had forgotten his gifts as a leader. Thus the Emperor found himself alone in his struggle against both his personal enemies and those of France. Had he received the same support as in the past he might still have proved victorious. His brothers gathered round him. My husband, who had constantly refused to leave foreign territory, came home now that he saw these countries declaring war on France, to add his efforts to those of the rest of the family. On this occasion, too, he stayed with his mother. I did not see him once.

When my husband had heard the pronouncement of all the foreign sovereigns to the effect that France must surrender all territories beyond her natural frontiers, he believed that Holland could not fail to become independent again, and he had proposed to the Emperor to withdraw his abdication and reassume the Dutch crown. The Emperor had refused.

Since the death of Duroc the post of Grand Marshal had remained unoccupied. The Emperor liked Monsieur de Flahaut and had been much pleased with his conduct of the different missions entrusted to him during the last campaign. He thought of appointing him to this post. But the Duc de Rovigo, who considered that he was more or less entitled to it himself, spoke to the Emperor about Monsieur de Flahaut's attachment to me and the talk to which it gave rise in Paris. The Emperor wished his Grand Marshal to be entirely devoted to his interests. He feared any influence not entirely his own. He had entrusted Monsieur de Flahaut with a certain little negotiation which required secrecy. The Duc de Rovigo called on me and in the course of our conversation looked at me

fixedly while speaking of this mission, as though I must know what he was referring to. Although little accustomed to conceal my thoughts, I was obliged to make an effort and appear entirely ignorant of what he meant, in order not to injure the prospects of the man who concealed nothing from me. I suspected that this little stratagem had been employed to discover to what extent Monsieur de Flahaut took me into his confidence. The result was that Savary remained Head of the Police Department and that the Emperor appointed General Bertrand, who was already his *side-de-camp*, Grand Marshal of the Palace. Everyone approved of his choice, for Bertrand was a gifted man, unpretentious in his manner, kind hearted, loyal and upright.

Meanwhile nothing was heard about the peace so ardently desired. France was uneasy and political parties stirred again. In order to compel them all to share his views the Emperor had been very high-handed in the past. When argument did not succeed he used force. And force succeeded. The young men belonging to the old nobility who had been obliged to serve at Court or in the army against the wishes of their parents became our partisans from the moment they shared the glory of the new regime. In the present instance, however, the Emperor neglected the old nobility which he neither feared nor needed, and called up all the youths belonging to the richest and most influential families of France, compelling them to enter the regiments of the *Gardes d'Honneur*. These orders were severe and were unfortunately carried out without discretion, and bitter animosities resulted from them.

Victories would have calmed everything, defeats envenomed everything. In an instant the benefits of the law-giver, the exploits of the general were forgotten, and only the conqueror remembered. Even we, his own family, who were used to regard him as the master of our fate, now dared to revolt and blame him openly for continuing a war which, perhaps, it was no longer in his power to end.

The Prince de Bénévent (Talleyrand) who for long had felt humiliated, saw the weakness of the Emperor's position

and sought to profit by it. He had the means of doing harm and used them. Seldom does cringing hatred let slip the chance she has been awaiting in the shade.

Meanwhile the crusade of all the Northern races, leagued together, set foot on the soil of France which had remained intact since our many victories. A panic such as had never occurred before seized the capital. The enemy in France! What has become of our army? What forces can we oppose to such a formidable invasion? And in truth no movement showed that we meant to defend ourselves.

I had gone to hear Mass at the Tuileries. The Duchesse de Montebello, apparently much alarmed, spoke to me, saying, "Madame, have you heard the news? The allied armies have crossed the Rhine. Paris is panic-stricken. What can the Emperor be thinking of?" The Empress, informed by the Duchess, appeared very agitated. "I bring misfortune wherever I go," she said to me. "All who have had anything to do with me, have been stricken, and since my childhood I have constantly been running away from wherever I happened to be."

I returned in the evening to the family dinner party. When I arrived the Emperor was alone with the Empress. He was holding her in his arms and seemed to be teasing her. "Ah, there you are, Hortense," he exclaimed laughingly as I entered, "Are people really so frightened in Paris? Do they already see the Cossacks in the streets? Well, they are not here yet and we have not forgotten our trade as soldiers. You may rest assured," he added, speaking to his wife, "we will go again to Vienna and beat Papa Francis." At dinner his son came in at dessert time. He repeated several times to the little boy, "Come on and beat Papa Francis." And the child repeated this phrase so frequently and so clearly that the Emperor seemed delighted and laughed heartily.

After dinner he sent for the Prince de Neufchâtel. "Come, Berthier," he said, "sit there," pointing to his green-covered table. "We must begin the Campaign of Italy over again," and he dictate

before us, speaking without any notes and outlining the whole organization of the army, which was to assemble on the plains of Châlons. He sent for the four generals in command of the Guard and enquired how many men were on sick leave, how many were available for active service. He paid particular attention to the reorganizing of this part of his forces. All this took time, and afterwards he dismissed everyone and turning to us he said "Well, ladies, are you satisfied? Do you think it will be so easy to catch us?"

As the national finances were in difficulties at that moment the Emperor took the funds required for this new campaign from his private treasury. His household was so perfectly ordered that it might have served as model to all the departments of the state.

The Emperor, very thrifty in his personal expenditure, was large and generous for others. He often cited the example of Charlemagne, who sold even the herbs from his garden, and he took the charge of his wardrobe away from his chamberlain Monsieur de Rémusat, because he had spent over 80,000 francs a year on it. One day the Emperor spoke to us about this and said "Can you imagine such a sum being spent on me, who wear only an officer's undress uniform? So I have told Monsieur de Turenne to look after my wardrobe expenses, which I limit to 24,000 francs a year and I will not have them exceeded." As he was extremely particular about his linen and lost a great deal of it while at the front, Monsieur de Turenne had recourse to all sorts of expedients to keep within this figure and even hunted up the Emperor's gloves if he happened to forget them in his carriage.* It was by practising such personal economy that the Emperor was able to come to the rescue of his Public Treasury. And then he often made gifts of two or three hundred thousand francs to his marshals and generals to help them pay their debts, or buy an estate or a town house. Before I left for Holland he came to a ball at my house. "You are not so well dressed as the other princesses, does not your husband make you a large enough allowance? Well, then I will set aside a hundred thousand francs a year for you from my personal

* See Note p. 263.

budget." Nevertheless, it must be noted that he never gave more than ought to be spent.

The Emperor's departure did not keep us long in expectation. One morning all the National Guard were summoned to the *Salle des Maréchaux*.* The Emperor had the King of Rome brought in, took him in his arms and, with the Empress beside him, and surrounded by the rest of his family, announced that he was leaving for the front and declared his confidence in the National Guard of Paris, to whom he entrusted the defence of the capital and the protection of those who were dearest to him.

The enthusiasm which greeted him was unfeigned, the more so that the position was critical and the interests of both individuals and the state seemed to be entirely dependent on his military genius. I saw many eyes filled with tears caused by a real emotion, and a few days later the same men not only abandoned the cause of the Emperor but loaded him with the grossest insults.

That evening I was alone with the Emperor and the Empress. She kept crying all the time and the Emperor kissed her repeatedly to console her. He took us with him into his study. While we were there warming ourselves by the fire he sorted his papers, burning a large number of letters. Every time he came near the hearth he embraced his wife, saying, "Do not be sad. Trust me; do you think I have forgotten my profession entirely?" And he added while he held his wife tightly in his arms, "I will beat Papa Francis again; don't cry, I shall be home again soon."

The hostile armies advanced slowly and cautiously. A conference, held at Châtillon, gave us some hope of a general peace. It seemed to me from the calculations the Emperor had made in our presence, that the entire force which was to resist all Europe did not amount to more than fifty or sixty thousand men. I trembled when I thought of this small number of troops, but his genius made up for everything.

Never did he display greater skill nor greater energy. He seemed to be everywhere at once. No sooner had he defeated the enemy at one point than he would be heard of

* See Note p 263.

repulsing their advance at another seventy-five miles away, and his army, like its chief, seemed to possess the gift of multiplying itself. It was as though the defenders of the soil of France drew new strength from the ground over which they fought. Thus it came about that with a handful of heroes the Emperor was able to hold the hosts of the Coalition in check, and had it not been for treachery he would perhaps have defeated them.

The King of Naples forgot all he owed to the Emperor and deceived himself into the belief that he could survive the fall of his natural protector. His wife shared his delusion. Ambition always makes men blind, and a just appreciation of what one owes to oneself is the best guide to follow in every circumstance and never leads astray.

My brother, whom the Emperor had sent from Dresden to reorganize an army in Italy, defended himself vigorously. The allied sovereigns offered to him the same terms as to Murat. He should keep the crown of Italy* if he would abandon the cause of France. There could be no doubt as to his answer. He refused and informed the Emperor what had occurred and in return the Emperor ordered him to send his wife, who was about to be confined, and his children to France. This want of confidence, excusable in a man who had just been so cruelly deceived by a member of his own family (Caroline), offended my brother. Even the appearance of mistrust offends a noble, scrupulous soul. Eugène's wife refused to obey, and hastened to shut herself up in the fortified town of Mantua, where she brought her child into the world amid all the horrors of war, but convinced that nowhere could she be so well off as near her husband.

Eugène had the advantage in several engagements, and had it not been for the Neapolitan army he would have made a diversion of the main attacks directed against us and thus, it might be, have greatly aided the Emperor's efforts.

Before leaving Paris the Emperor had dissolved the Chamber which seemed to wish to impede his measures of defence. There were cries of tyranny. The magic name of Liberty was invoked, and from that moment

* See Note p. 263.

everyone who opposed the Emperor adopted the title of "Liberal." Even his generals and his marshals, wearied of war, mingled their complaints with the general protest. It was as though their Republicanism, which had slept so long beneath their laurels, suddenly revived, and they denounced an ambition which they had themselves encouraged and of which they had reaped the benefits. The Emperor wished for peace as much as they, but he wished it with honour, and for that one must be the conqueror. Everyone has defects compensating his qualities. The Emperor, full of initiative, bold, inflexible, possessed of a tenacity which had enabled him to surmount every obstacle and often made him master of the field of battle, no longer knew how to yield and adapt his character to changed conditions, so that the very inflexibility which had so long been his strength was now a source of danger. Yet I have been told that he succeeded in conquering his aversion to accepting a peace whose bad faith he foresaw too clearly.

Had even a disadvantageous peace been signed at Châtillon, we should have seen the Emperor as popular as ever when he returned to Paris, so eager were the Parisians for peace. But he had always relied on his own genius and on the valour of the French nation. The amazing success of Montmirail had raised his hopes, and he must have hoped to obtain better terms for France, for his country's glory was always dearer to him than his own.

Shortly before this time, having resolved to unite all his forces, he had instructed the Minister of War to write to my brother that he must abandon Italy in order to concentrate his troops in France. Impatient of all delays, he wrote to my mother asking her to communicate the urgency of his demand to her son. "France first, she needs to gather all her children round her." So soon as my brother was informed of the Emperor's intentions, he sent his aide-de-camp, Tascher, to report the situation of his army. He had just gained a victory over the Austrians* and scored several successes against the Neapolitans, which enabled him to hold the enemy in check on that front while keeping

* See Note p 263

64 THE MEMOIRS OF QUEEN abandoned his position of Italians dwindle as he was in danger of seeing his army was convinced that he he advanced towards France, and he handful of French troops would only succeed in bringing his home time he should see across the frontier, while at the saugh Italy Monsieur the enemy penetrate France thro battlefield of Mont-Tascher met the Emperor on the 'Go back at once,' miral and fulfilled his mission go back tell Eugène the Emperor said to him "On hold on, hold tight to what you have seen here and bid hiast of the Emperor's Italy." This victory was the triumphs from sliding down the

But he stubbornly kept France is heroic obstinacy and slope. Only the army shared th and to the oath sworn, did not deflect. Faithful to duty one idea and one hope, the army, like its chief, had only r country, but fortune that of defending and saving the was no longer with us. fied All these warlike

Paris had been hurriedly fort tal but could not destroy preparations had terrified the capi Other nations are serious the natural gaiety of the French not come to them as a and solemn Misfortune does heir chances and found surprise. They have counted Frenchman finds courage he when his capital was courage in reflection But the as in danger, he laughed, in his native gaiety At a tin ngings from the Cossaks threatened, when every fortune w prepared a picnic The and people hid their precious belr, last minute as gaily as they would have uard was excellent At theatres remained open to the v ilian would be a soldier

The morale of the National leader was lacking The the approach of danger every e re at once He was out and defend his hearth Only th him towards Paris He Emperor could not be everywhere ould hold for a few days flanking the enemy so as to tur No, ' but he continued to had enquired whether the city But while he did so the It is true the answer had been who could guide its course, carry out his strategic plans The habit of obedience State, deprived of the one man self-distrust and depre drifted along, the sport of chanc to a superior intellect creates

men of their initiative. Yet any line of action is better than none, for to be active is to serve one's cause.

The Emperor's brothers met privately. I went to see the Empress, now the Regent, and, as always, I found myself an alien to the rest of the family. My drawing-room had become a workroom and we spent our time making lint for the hospitals. This melancholy occupation had something consoling about it. Those whom we loved were no longer struggling among icy wastes. In these days they were near at hand, almost in sight, and a sister, a wife, a mother, could hasten to the bedside of someone who had been wounded. This feeling that we were sharing their misfortune, that we were no longer isolated, gave us the energy demanded by the circumstances, and overcame the weakness that the impossibility of being useful so often creates in women.

Early in the morning of March 28th, 1814, my waiting-woman came into my room and with a frightened air announced that the enemy was not far from Paris, and that the wounded French soldiers were taking refuge at the gates. Although I knew little of what was taking place, I found it hard to believe that the Allies were so close at hand when none of my relatives had said a word to me about it. I had spent the preceding evening with the Empress, who had not appeared to know more than I did myself. I had played a game of whist with Monsieur de Talleyrand and Monsieur de Molé and we had joked about the rumours that the enemy was on the point of capturing Paris, so far were we from taking these tales at all seriously.

For the last month I had gone out riding every day for my health. I went out as usual, and, passing along the outer boulevards, I was not long in seeing for myself that what my maid had said was true. Many wounded soldiers, who were being sent back to Versailles, their dépôt, assured me the enemy was not far away. This picture of war close to me, right under my eyes, made a deep impression on me. I returned home with a clutching at my heart, but knowing that the moment to brace up our courage was at hand.

In the evening I went, quite early, to see the Empress. She was on her way to the Cabinet meeting, where, she told me, the question of her departure was to be discussed. I tried by a thousand arguments to persuade her not to think of leaving Paris. I told her that if she left she would be quite as certain to fall into the enemy's hands as if he captured the city, whereas her presence in the capital encouraged everyone, that we must all try and be worthy of the rank we held and fulfil its obligations, that, if misfortune fell to our lot we must accept it, but that she above everyone had duties to perform, and that in Paris she alone ran no personal risk, while her presence would stimulate everyone's courage and devotion.

I was still talking to her when King Joseph came into the room. I went on speaking, but although he listened he did not say a word, no doubt because in the days of the Empire women's ideas regarding political matters were considered silly and worthless.

I remained alone in the drawing-room to await the decision of the Cabinet meeting. It was necessary for me to know it at once so as to be able to send word to my mother who, alone at Malmaison, knew nothing of events and whom everyone seemed to have forgotten.

The Duchesse de Montebello came to keep me company. I knew the influence she possessed with the Empress and I explained, more in detail than I had been able to do before, how essential it was for the Empress to remain in Paris. I added that the Emperor must surely be aware of our position and that he was too skilful a strategist not to come to our rescue—in fact, that it was a very inappropriate movement to abandon Paris, which must be defended at all costs if we were not to risk losing everything.

On her return from the Cabinet meeting, the Empress, who was accompanied by King Joseph and the High Chancellor, said to me half laughing and half shy, "I am leaving and I advise you to do the same." The Minister of War assures me that it is impossible to defend Paris. I was dumbfounded. All I was able to answer was, "At least, sister, remember that you lose your crown. I am glad to see that you sacrifice it with a smile." She came

close to me and said in a low voice, "Perhaps you are right, but thus it has been decided, and if the Emperor reproaches anyone, it will not be me."

It was agreed that she was to leave during the night. The High Chancellor protested against such haste. He declared no arrangements had been made, no orders given, and that the Empress had scarcely time to have a few articles of wearing apparel packed. As far as he was concerned it was quite impossible for him to be ready. They were on the point of forgetting the treasure and then took the opportunity of sending it off at the same time as the Empress, so as to avoid a double escort. I went up to King Joseph and asked him if anything had been decided about us. He replied that in such delicate circumstances it behoved everyone to decide for himself what had best be done and that he had no advice to offer.

I went home sick at heart at the sight of such weakness, and on seeing Monsieur Lavallette I exclaimed, "Only women know how to rise to the occasion and when the fate of nations depends on such men as I have just seen, one cannot be surprised if everything goes wrong, and if even the best causes are lost!" Then, adding a spice of mischief to the gravity of the occasion, I described the High Chancellor's alarm, his absolute lack of energy at the moment when it was most necessary, and the unfortunate consequences of a policy which made the Empress and her son drive away in broad daylight without troops, without orders and without a head able to guide them, at the risk of their being taken two days later, and without a thought for the crushing depression that would result in the capital.*

Since I was left free to do as I pleased, I was strongly tempted not to run so many risks and to stay on in Paris. I went to bed, putting off till the morrow the task of taking such an important decision. From the Tuileries I had dispatched a mounted messenger to Malmaison to inform my mother of what had taken place and urge her to leave immediately for the château of Navarre.

I had just fallen asleep when a message arrived from my husband telling me the decision the Empress had taken. I replied that I already knew of it, and tried to go to sleep

* See Note p 263.

again. A moment later he wrote another message suggesting that I should accompany the Empress. I again replied that it would be time enough to make up my mind early the next morning, and I thought that at last I was going to get a little rest when, for the third time, he sent me word ordering me to leave Paris. Such a restless night in addition to my delicate health, was not calculated to prepare me for the difficulties and dangers that lay ahead. Nevertheless I got up and prepared to obey. This was the more easily done as it had been for a long time a habit of mine to be ready for whatever might happen. I only needed a very few minutes to make my final preparations.

The Empress had just started, and I at once saw the bad effect that this departure had produced. The National Guard, who previously had been prepared to defend themselves, were now completely discouraged. The townspeople, who in the morning had been demanding arms to share in the defence, appeared utterly dismayed. They had hooted the carriage of Madame Mère when she drove off and, having witnessed all those departures in broad daylight, had freely expressed their opinion of this family that seemed to abandon them.

One curious incident had occurred. The little King of Rome, who went out for a walk every morning, on that particular day, acting from some whim which cannot really be called a premonition, had refused obstinately to leave his apartment. He caught hold of all the doors, crying out as he did so, "I don't want to go out!" Force had had to be used finally to drag him out and he sobbed violently.

I have since been told that Monsieur de Talleyrand, as he led the Duchesse de Montebello to the Empress's carriage and helped her step in, pressed her hand and said "Ah, my poor duchess, how they are fooling you!" At the Council meeting he had expressed the opinion that the Empress ought not to leave Paris.

I was most uncertain what to do. There was no one near who could advise me or even organize my escape if I decided to make one. The officers attached to my household were not soldiers and I was liable to be confronted with all the problems of a retreat.

Monsieur de Labédoyère was announced. He had been wounded at Bautzen at the head of his regiment and since then had been in Paris convalescing. I had not seen him since his marriage. He called to place himself at my disposal. I declined his offer but expressed my appreciation of it, for his devotion touched me, as his family were so hostile to the Empire and as he had lately married a wife whose personal sympathies allied her very closely with another dynasty.

A peasant brought the Duchesse de Bassano a line from her husband, who was with the Emperor, saying, "We shall soon be with you." She and several other ladies attached to the Court came to see me. All were distressed by the Empress's departure, which paralysed all defensive measures, and all were as convinced as myself that if Paris could hold out for a day the Emperor would arrive and save his capital. But despite our conviction, what could lonely, inexperienced women do?

Meanwhile the National Guard sent to enquire whether it was true that I, too, was leaving. Comte Regnault de Saint-Jean-d'Angely, who commanded a portion of these troops, was the delegate who called on me. I answered that if they were prepared to defend me I would stay with my children. So my horses were countermanded, and I prepared to take my chance with the capital.

My husband, hearing that in spite of his reiterated orders I had not left, had declined to accompany the Empress, although he had been appointed to do so. He was waiting for me to get into the carriage to follow my example, as his health would not allow him to ride. It was for this reason that he had been appointed to accompany the Empress. King Joseph and King Jérôme remained behind to defend the town. My husband, hearing my renewed decision not to leave, sent me word that, although in his opinion it was a mistake to abandon the capital, the Minister of War declared that it would be impossible to defend it. He added that if I persisted in remaining behind he would claim his children and take them away with him, for I did not understand the risk that I was running, and that if my children were taken as hostages, I should be responsible for

anything that might happen to them. This language was too strong for me to disregard it, but as I had given my word that I would stay I could not break it. Besides, I was convinced that the Emperor would come to our rescue and that with a little pluck Paris could easily hold out for a day or two. And so I stayed, in spite of all the reasons that were given me.

Towards nightfall Comte Regnault de Saint-Jeand'Angely came in a state of great agitation, and asked me, on behalf of the National Guard itself, not to stay in Paris, adding that the enemy had already seized the heights, that the town would doubtless be bombarded and taken in the morning, that anything might happen, and that not only was I freed from my promise but that his troops would prefer to know that I and my children were out of danger. So I gave in in the end, seeing clearly that no one could rise to the occasion, that everyone had completely lost their heads, and that one could only accept the decrees of Providence*.

My personal relations with my husband were not the least of my worries. After all my years of domestic misery nothing terrified me more than the thought of again being with him and dependent on him. The thought of becoming a prisoner in the hands of strangers seemed hardly less intolerable to me than that of having to affect a reconciliation with the man who had so embittered my existence. It seemed as though he had waited for this moment to regain his prey. At least that was how it looked to me, for he ought to have accompanied the Empress and under some pretext or another he had avoided doing so. He had ordered horses and yet would not take the road till I had started. One of his servants was stationed at my door and was to inform him of my departure. He seemed to attach the greatest importance to my not remaining in Paris, but no doubt his uneasiness in regard to the fate of his children made this anxiety natural enough. Tormented by all these worries, I stepped into my carriage at eight o'clock in the evening. Already several hours earlier I had received word that Cossacks had been seen on the Plaine des Vertus [Aubervilliers]. I had

accepted the offer of a lady to spend the night at her château near Versailles. As soon as we were outside the gates I gave orders to my outrider to keep a hundred paces ahead of the carriage, and if he saw any Cossacks to fire his pistol in the air to warn the coachmen to turn back.

I arrived without any trouble at Glatigny, worn out by so many varied emotions. I was undecided whether to proceed to Rambouillet and rejoin the Empress Marie-Louise or to go to my mother at Navarre, where she must have arrived. In such troublous times irresolution is one of our chief ills. Mine sprang especially from my continual fear of meeting my husband. On the other hand it is true that these domestic troubles distracted my mind from my reverses of fortune, and allowed me to face these latter problems calmly.

It was late when we arrived at Glatigny. I had my children put to bed immediately and threw myself on to a couch. Hardly had I secured a little rest when day began to break and I heard the cannon and even musketry from Paris. "A cannon that kills!" Hitherto I had heard it only in connection with public rejoicing. The frightful idea that death was overtaking my fellow countrymen so near at hand, far from hastening my flight, held me through my wish to learn the fate of the city which had been my cradle, and whose inhabitants seemed one and all my friends that day.

I believed that my situation would not allow me to remain in a private house, and I went to the Petit-Trianon. I sent for General Préval, who was in command of the cavalry dépôt at Versailles, and told him my intention of remaining there while waiting further events, begging him to let me know the moment there was any danger. I knew well that it was possible for the Cossacks to come to the Trianon by the Malmaison and Bougival road, but I trusted to him for protection.

I ordered my servants not to leave the premises, and I walked about the gardens hearing those sounds of firing which pierced my heart. But soon I breathed again, for the noise stopped, and I could think that at any rate men were no longer killing one another. A good long

time afterwards I saw a soldier of one of the *chasseurs* regiments coming from the distance and on foot. He said he was sent by the General, and asked to speak to me privately. His calm, quiet demeanour and the fact that he was on foot did not forbode misfortune, but, for all that, he had been sent by the General to say that there was not a moment to be lost, that the troops were leaving the depôt at Versailles, that the princes and ministers had already passed through the town, and that in a few hours the city would be occupied by the enemy. It was lucky that the General remembered me!

I sent for my attendants, some of whom had gone into Versailles in spite of my orders. I tried by my collected manner to reassure those who had stayed, and at last we set out for Rambouillet. I found the road congested with carriages, soldiers, wounded men and peasant refugees. What ought I to do? Which way was I to turn? On the one hand I might fall into the clutches of my husband, on the other my mother was almost abandoned and had a claim on me, but after all my fate was bound up with that of a family whose head had been a father to me. Could I desert them in their misfortune? This last idea turned the scale, and I decided to rejoin the Empress Marie-Louise.

I was turning over these thoughts in my mind while my children, with the unconcern of their age, played about in the carriage and enjoyed themselves as though our flight were a game, and as if at that moment they were not losing all their future.

It was very late when I arrived at Rambouillet, and the princes and cabinet ministers having rested their horses were setting out for Chartres. They were greatly surprised to see me. My first thought was to enquire about Paris. King Joseph seemed inclined to make a mystery of the capitulation, but King Jérôme gave me the details and even showed me a proclamation said to have been written by the Prince of Schwarzenberg, inviting the Parisians to follow the example of the town of Bordeaux,* which had asked for the return of the Bourbons. They advised me not to remain an hour longer at Rambouillet, for the Cossacks

* See Note p. 263.

would doubtless be there that night. I paid no heed to their advice, considering, perhaps unjustly, that they made too much of the danger. Moreover, it was out of the question to go on with horses that had just travelled twenty-five miles, so I quietly sent my children to bed, and was about to seek the rest of which I stood in great need, when an orderly-officer with a letter from my husband was announced. The King had crossed Versailles during the night and, furious at not finding me with the Empress, he commanded me in the harshest language to join her immediately. He added an official order, signed by the Secretary of State and by the Empress herself. In my husband's letter there was such an offensive expression that I was furious. It settled all my hesitations, and I no longer wondered whether or not I should go to my mother. I wrote to my husband that I had been on my way to join the Empress Marie-Louise, but that his severity had recalled my former sufferings too vividly, and that I should try to escape them by joining my mother. At the same time I reassured him as to his children. I also wrote to the Empress and the Emperor apologizing for my conduct, and giving the true reason for it. All these letters I gave to the officer, who had almost been ordered to bring me back with him as a prisoner.

I had been interrupted for a moment by Colonel de Carignan, who with his regiment was covering the retreat, and who, finding no one qualified to direct him, was in much perplexity as to what he ought to do. He was furious with the Minister of War, who had left no orders for him. It was I who gave them. I begged him to keep his regiment in the town until I left, and above all to inform me if his scouts caught sight of any Cossacks. This having been done and my letters written and dispatched, I was dead with fatigue and was about to rest when suddenly someone came knocking at my door crying out as he did so, "Quick! Quick! We must leave at once." I felt sure the Cossacks were there and sprang up. But it was a false alarm caused by some other travellers who were leaving, and who by mistake had knocked on my door. The château of Rambouillet, filled

fears had driven them from Paris, was like a public hostelry, open to every passer-by.

At dawn the Duchesse de Ragusa and the Duchesse de Reggio, Madame de Sainte-Aulaire and Madame Mollien arrived. They were in despair that Paris had capitulated without a struggle. They told me that their husbands were prepared to die fighting beside the Emperor, who would probably make a last stand under the walls of Paris. After listening to a hundred futile comments on the situation, I advised them not to remain any longer at Rambouillet, as the town was in danger and I myself was leaving immediately to go on to Navarre.

My route led through the forest.* I sent a gamekeeper ahead of me to act as guide. Hardly had I entered the wood when one of my servants dashed up breathless, as hard as his horse could tear, to say that he had just met some Cossacks in the plain of La Queue. I cast a glance at a map of the environs of Paris which I had had the foresight to bring with me, as there was no one with me who could advise me, and I saw that, taking into account the distance and the time, I was making straight for the Cossacks. I retraced my route and returned to the broad military highway.* I had scarcely proceeded a mile on the road when I saw a Cossack come out of the woods and gallop across the plain. My outrider galloped to meet him, and he disappeared again in the woods.

I had only just time to cross the plain before the arrival of a number of Cossacks. Not being able to stop at Maintenon I asked the colonel of a French regiment, which fortunately happened to be there, to let me have an escort to accompany me across country as far as Louye, the estate belonging to Monsieur d'Arjuzon, my gentleman-in-waiting, who with his wife was accompanying me. It was there that I proposed to spend the night. At that moment a messenger passed, from whom I learned that he had just left the Emperor at the post-house *La Cour de France*, and that the Emperor, alone with an aide-de-camp, was on his way to Paris in a barouche.

This news shocked me extremely. I pictured Paris in ashes, and the Emperor himself, after a thousand

* See Note p. 263.

attempts to snatch his capital from the hands of the enemy, dying, it might be, with all who were with him. What a horrible prospect ! “ Ah,” I cried to myself, “ if they had believed me how many disasters might have been averted ! ” The agitation of these dreadful thoughts quite unhinged me.

Once at Louye I dismissed my escort and, in completest solitude, gave way to all the weakness of my sex. So long as I had been obliged to protect the safety of my children, so long as I had been active, courage had not failed me. But now, reassured as to the fate of those dear creatures, the vision of my friends and country rose before my eyes. My imagination saw flames and bloodshed everywhere, and my peaceable surroundings were in such contrast to the carnage that I supposed to be taking place only a few miles off that I regretted the turmoil from which I had just escaped. Nevertheless, the night spent at Louye gave me a rest much needed after so many fatigues of every kind.*

The next day I arrived at my mother's house, and she, after so much anxiety about me, was overjoyed to see me. She was as ignorant as I of what had taken place in Paris, but we soon heard the facts from a servant who had managed to escape. He told me of the entry of the Allied Armies which he had witnessed, and of the return of the Bourbons, of which everyone spoke. This news was bearable in comparison with all that my imagination had conjured up. “ So it is a change of dynasty,” I said. “ Well ! if France does not suffer by it we alone shall be sacrificed ! ” The calamity was not so great as I had believed, and my emotion died down. But when among the young women who had been most eager to greet the foreign invaders he named several belonging to the Empress's own household, we were humiliated that well-born French ladies should behave in a way which would have made women of the lowest classes blush.* Our national honour was never dearer to me than in these moments when it was shamed under the very eyes of the enemy.

Talleyrand's household had been, as I learned later, the centre of this revolution. For a long time he had been in correspondence with all the enemies of France through the

* See Note p. 263.

was under discussion, supported the arrangements made in my favour, saying, "Ah! I put Queen Hortense in a class by herself!" All political parties seemed to sympathize with the position in which my mother and I found ourselves.

The Empress and I each received a letter from the Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg * This is a copy of mine.

MADAM

I am pleased again to be able to communicate with your Majesty and at the same time convey news that may not prove altogether disagreeable. Since my arrival here I have been anxious about our Majesty's fate in view of the painful situation in which she finds herself. Monsieur de Humboldt was the first to furnish me with exact details as to where she was staying and thus reassured me. From that moment on I may say that my one thought has been how I might make myself of use to her for hitherto I have never been able to show my devotion except in words. The arrival of Mademoiselle Cochelet led me to see what might be necessary to the interests of your Majesty and of her august Mother. I resolved to speak frankly to my Emperor and Lord, and I hasten to repeat to your Majesty the result of the conversation which took place to-day. I trust that she will forgive me if I acted on her behalf without having received any instructions to do so. The kindest of Emperors if I may call him so said that for a long time he had desired to make the acquaintance of those princesses whose worth was only equalled by their charm and that he was deeply interested in the fate of that estimable family which had behaved so nobly in such trying circumstances. He highly praised the conduct of the Viceroy who alone has shown nobility and dignity in his conduct. It would take too long to repeat in full all the favourable and true remarks the Emperor made regarding your Majesties. He finally asked me to convey to your Majesty as well as to her august Mother his desire to make their acquaintance. He would have gone to Navarre had that place not been so remote, but he suggests they meet him at Malmaison, as being nearer Paris and more agreeable. He hopes to see your Majesty there and also her children. At the same time he conveyed to me the most reassuring news regarding the business affairs of your Majesty's family. Mademoiselle Cochelet has undertaken to convey this letter as well as one in which I inform Her Majesty the Empress of the result of the steps I have taken. May I request your Majesty to deign to inform me when she arrives at Malmaison and when her august Mother will also be there, in order that I can inform the Emperor in advance? May I also request her to treat me as her man of affairs who will

attend to anything she may consider necessary³ At the same time I assure her that my greatest reward will be the knowledge that what I have done on her behalf meets with her approval Until the moment comes when I can, in person, offer my homage and beseech her to accept the expression of my complete devotion and profound respect I have the honour to remain, Madam, Your Majesty's most humble and most obedient servant,

LEOPOLD, PRINCE OF SAXE-COBOURG,

General in the service of Russia

Paris, *April 14th*, 1814

The letter addressed to the Empress was very similar. I told my mother that I considered she was quite free to accept the invitation of the Emperor of Russia. The divorce had completely separated her from the Bonapartè family, and she must have someone to rely on. But as for me, my duty lay elsewhere and nothing could prevent me from fulfilling it. I resisted my mother's urgent request that I accompany her, and at last made her understand that my place was where the misfortune was the greatest, and as I supposed that the Empress Marie-Louise must be overcome with grief, I could not hesitate in going to offer her my consolations.

So my mother left for Malmaison and I for Rambouillet,* by that same route over which I had passed a few days before in such an agitated state of mind. Now I was calmer. There was no more uncertainty. Our disaster was definitely accomplished. Just as I was leaving Louye my groom arrived from Paris with another letter from Prince Leopold, of which this was the postscript :

MADAM,

I have just been told by Mademoiselle Cochelet that Your Majesty is no longer with the Empress her mother, and that her august mother has arrived at Malmaison alone I venture to entreat Your Majesty not to delay in joining her there, as I am officially instructed by the Emperor to propose to her this interview at Malmaison, and I know that he attaches particular value to Your Majesty's presence I consider that this interview is of the utmost importance for the interests of Your Majesty and of her children, and I am intensely desirous that the Empress and Your Majesty together have this interview with the Emperor Your Majesty will forgive the advice that I have ventured to offer her, as she

* See Note p 264.

knows it to be prompted by my attachment to her person, and I venture to assure myself that by way of answer she will deign to come to Malmaison.

Mademoiselle Cochelet added a number of stronger arguments regarding the interests of my children. She based herself on Monsieur de Nesselrode's opinion that I ought not to return to the Empress Marie-Louise. All agreed that it was most inadvisable for me to seem to make common cause with a family whose very name France would no longer hear. To do so would prevent my making myself useful to my country in the future, and so on and so forth.

Although generally docile and easy to guide where the little things of daily life are involved, nothing can prevent me from executing what I am convinced ought to be done. The more harm it seems likely to do me the more I insist on accomplishing it. Neither letters nor arguments had any effect on me, and I set out for Rambouillet as I had decided to do.

On my way I met French cavalry retreating into Normandy. The dejected, crestfallen appearance of these brave fellows, whom their commander, the Duc de Ragusa, had betrayed at the moment they believed they were going into action made me very sad. Soon I reached the enemy's outposts—theirs were the first foreign uniforms I had seen. I felt a pang which increased when, on entering the château, I found the Russian guard on duty with the Empress Marie-Louise. I came to her deeply moved and disposed to offer her all the consolation that lay in my power. I did not know whether I should find the Emperor's brothers with the Empress, but I heard that they had left for Switzerland and that only the Empress and the King of Rome remained at Rambouillet.

My visit was announced. Imagine my surprise! The Empress sent back word that she was not well, that she was writing to the Emperor, and that she would inform me when she could receive me! It seemed to me that in our common misfortune, when her heart must be more deeply wounded than mine, a sign of sympathy should

comfort and not disturb her. I went to see the King of Rome. Poor child! He was playing in his sitting-room, in happy ignorance of what the future held in store. I kissed him with emotion and tenderness, and then retired to my apartment, where some time later I was informed that the Empress had asked for me.

I found her in bed, downcast and sad. She gave me news of the Emperor, complained bitterly about his brothers and their persistency in insisting that she should go farther away.

In obedience to the Emperor's express orders they had attached the utmost importance to keeping the Empress and the King of Rome out of the hands of the foreign powers. "I would rather see my son in the Seine," he had declared, "than in the hands of France's enemies." It was fear of this eventuality which had so unwisely hastened the departure from Paris. Thus the Emperor's brothers were, in a way, compelled to hurry the Empress and her son into some place of safety, especially as they had not dared infringe this order even at a time when, by doing so, they would have put heart into the defence of the capital. They were obliged to carry out orders. Well! Is it possible to understand the sort of infatuation that turned our heads in these hours of trial? Everyone thought that the Emperor's brothers had treated the Empress cruelly!*

She asked me what I intended to do. I replied that my only idea had been to come to her and offer her my consolation. This seemed to embarrass her and she added, "I am expecting my father to-morrow morning. I shall be glad to see him alone; besides, as he does not know you, I fear that he might not feel at ease before you."

I assured her that my only reason for coming to Rambouillet was the hope that I might be useful to her in some way, that I had only consulted my own heart, and that, not being able to do anything for her, I would leave the next morning early to go back to my mother, who was most anxious to have me with her.

After this explanation she seemed more at her ease. "You are luckier than I am," she said; "no one has aban-

* See Note p 264.
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doned you and I have hardly a handful of people to wait on me." What was most on her mind, however, was the thought of meeting her father the next day. I could not understand why this should upset her so, and I was trying to reassure her when she suddenly said to me "Ah! sister, do you think that my father will insist that I should go to the island of Elba?" I confess I was so astonished I did not know what reply to make. Was such a thing possible? What! was this the woman who could not be away from the Emperor for a single day, and who had overcome all my arguments by the show of the tenderest affection—for I could not understand this excessive love for a man whom it was natural to admire, but whom I should have thought it difficult for so young a woman, brought up with such different opinions, to love with passion. Her conduct during the Empire had convinced me that I had been mistaken. In the long run I had come to believe that no political scheming lay at the foundation of her demonstrative affection. At what a moment was I disillusioned! So the Crown was what she regretted!

Suffering caused by a wound to one's self-love has no interest in my eyes. I felt that I was not needed here, and my mother, whose heart was broken by the affliction of the man she had always loved, was the person to whom I was necessary. So I thought only how I could most quickly return to her and next morning I made my farewells to the Empress and left her. I was very much less moved than I had been when I arrived.

On the road, a few miles from Rambouillet, I passed the Emperor of Austria and Monsieur de Metternich driving alone in a little open calash.*

* See Note p. 264.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FIRST RESTORATION. THE DEATH OF JOSEPHINE (April 16th—May 31st, 1814)

Return to Malmaison—Visit from the Emperor Alexander—Treaty of April 11th, 1814—Napoleon leaves for Elba—Joséphine and Madame de Rémusat—Eugène in Paris—Business affairs—Estate at Saint-Leu—A newspaper article—Joséphine's last illness and death—Farewell of the Emperor of Russia

I REACHED Malmaison at one o'clock in the afternoon (April 16th, 1814). I was surprised to find the courtyard full of Cossacks, and I enquired why they were there. I was told it was because my mother was walking in the garden with the Emperor of Russia. I went to join them and met them near the hot-house. My mother, pleased and surprised by my arrival, kissed me tenderly and said to her companion, "This is my daughter, and these are my grandsons. I commend them to you." She withdrew her arm from his and he at once offered it to me. Thus, having scarcely looked at one another, without having, either of us, uttered a word, we found ourselves, the Emperor Alexander and I, alone, at some little distance from the rest of the company and rather embarrassed in beginning our interview. My position was difficult. Although I had for a long while heard a great deal of good about the Emperor of Russia, even from the Emperor Napoleon, and though I had formerly been most anxious to know him, this was not the moment to say so. A cold reserve was the only sentiment that I could show with propriety in the presence of my country's conqueror, and if he had not begun to talk of the visit I had just made to the Empress Marie-Louise, I believe that I should not have found a

word to say. Fortunately this constrained conversation was not a long one.

We reached the château, where my mother and the children joined us. With her usual grace my mother found subjects to talk about. The Emperor deplored the ravages of war, and his words rang true as he assured us that without any personal end in view his sole ambition was to put an end to the carnage. These sentiments offered my heart some consolation in the riven state of France. I took it kindly of him, but kept silence. He petted my children a great deal and asked me, "What is there I can do for them? Allow me to be their *chargé-d'affaires*."

I replied that I thanked him, that I needed nothing for my children, but that I was very sensible to his interest in them. He left and I was scolded by my mother for the cold way I had treated him. I pointed out how misplaced any warmth would have been towards the man who had just declared himself the personal enemy of the Emperor, and who had destroyed my children's future and the position of the family whose name I bore.

I did not dare to ask the French nation to share my regrets when I saw how on all hands people seemed to congratulate themselves as though the downfall of the Empire were a benefit, and that each day addresses came from all parts of the kingdom approving what had taken place in Paris, and that so many thousand voices greeted the Restoration as an era of deliverance. The less the changes of fortune distressed me personally, the less I considered myself justified in showing my absence of concern. The public could not have understood me. In its haste to condemn me it would have considered me hypocritical, as I ought presumably to have been afflicted by this change in my social position, and so many deplorable events would have justified my being sad. It needed only a slight effort on my part to seem sad, and it was my duty not to lower myself in any way.

Then, too, I felt very constrained at hearing the Emperor so frequently accused of having, through his own fault, postponed a peace that everyone longed for, while these

foreigners talked all the time about the establishment of that era of good-will so necessary to the human race, and lavished on France magnificent promises of liberty and prosperity. I was jealous at seeing them in such a noble pose, for I was then far from supposing that all their speeches about freedom and prosperity were merely snares, and that the unhappy populace, so trusting, would soon find itself more tightly bound than it had been before.

I will not go into the details of the abdication. I will not examine the motives of those who advised it. I will speak only of the men whose conduct was noble to the end. Among them General Macdonald and the Duc de Vicenza deserve especial mention. The latter was honoured for his devotion in defending the interests of the Emperor and of his family. He wrote me a letter to inform me what he had done in my favour in the treaty of Fontainebleau,* by separating my destiny from that of my husband, and assuring me the guardianship of my children, a clause for which he had the approval of the Emperor Napoleon. Here is his letter :

MADAME,

Your Majesty retains her children, she may continue to live among her friends. Everything she cares for has received as favourable treatment as circumstances will permit. I have been so pleased to be able to contribute to an arrangement which will be agreeable to her that I wish to be the first to advise her. Your Majesty is aware how devoted our family is to her. I venture to hope that she will count on this devotion, and that, in the midst of the misfortunes which afflict her and ourselves also, she will continue to rely on our sentiments of respect and loyalty.

I remain, etc ,

CAULAINCOURT, DUC DE VICENZA

Paris, *April 11th*, 1814

He sent me at the same time the clause in the treaty which referred to me and which read as follows :

Article VI — There shall be set aside in the countries given up by the Emperor, for his use or the use of his family estates, or funds drawn from the Treasury, producing a net come
of 2,500,000 frs free of all charges. These rds

* See Note p 264

to belong to and be the property of, the princes and princesses of his family to do with as they see fit. They shall be divided among them in such a manner that the income shall be apportioned as follows

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| To Madame Mère - - - - - | 300 000 francs. |
| To King Joseph - - - - - | 300 000 |
| To King Louis - - - - - | 200 000 |
| To Queen Hortense and her children - | 400 000 |
| To King Jérôme and the Queen - - | 500 000 " |
| To Princesse Elisa - - - - - | 300 000 |
| To Princesse Pauline - - - - - | 300 000 |

There shall be set aside for Prince Eugène Viceroy of Italy a suitable domain outside France.

The Empress Joséphine was to keep an income of a million francs, which reverted to the crown after her death.

All these agreements made it appear as though I were about to enjoy an ease and independence such as I had never known before. My mother hoped I should not leave her, and this was the only point that had not yet been settled. As she had for the past few years been living in seclusion and had not appeared at Court, there could be no objection to her remaining in France, but this was more difficult in my case. To leave my country was a thought that I had at first faced with courage, but when I contemplated it in cold blood it seemed of all sacrifices the most painful. I did not dare to speak of it to my mother nor think of it myself.

As the Emperor of Russia had come to Malmaison, everyone thought himself obliged to do so. The Prince of Neufchâtel, among so many others. He seemed embarrassed, trying to find excuses for himself in the Emperor's ambitions, in the prosperity of France, and a thousand other phrases which always occur to those who leave us when Fortune frowns. He was a hard-working, indefatigable man versed in all the duties of a staff officer, but of no outstanding talent or ability. The Emperor had found him, taken him, used him, and from the force of habit had given him the name of friend.

I also saw Bernadotte, the Swedish Crown Prince. A former Republican, he was brave, with a charming, gracious politeness, and full of military talents. He, too,

wished to explain his conduct, and it is always awkward when conduct requires explanation. He assured me that the Emperor's injustice towards him and towards Sweden were the only reasons for his taking arms, and that these arms had not struck a single blow since he set foot on his native soil.

The King of Prussia and the Princes of the Confederated German States also hastened to call on my mother.

I have already said that up to this time I had remained entirely ignorant of politics. The results attained, peace or war, were the only things which gave me cause for joy or grief, and, in truth, such was the way of thinking of all women during the Empire. Everyone would have thought it ridiculous for a woman to have anything to do with political affairs. This pleased the Emperor. But in view of the prominent position I occupied, this ignorance became dangerous for me at this time. I found myself suddenly in a position such as I never dreamed that I should be called to occupy, and where a mistake might have the very gravest consequences for me. Yet I knew nothing whatever of the interests of nations, or their rights or of the sentiments or the designs that they might cherish in regard to my family or myself.

One day the Empress brought to me the Marshal von Wrede [commander of the Bavarian forces during the campaign in France], whom the King of Bavaria had sent to see her in regard to her son's position. "Then," she said, "I will leave you with my daughter. She knows better than I what could be best for her brother."

A few months before the entrance of the Allies into Paris the King of Bavaria had written to my brother seeking to win him away from the Imperial cause. The crown of Italy was offered to him by the Allies at this price. My brother very rightly refused. Remembering this incident, it seemed to me that if another overture was made by Napoleon's father-in-law it must be in consequence of some new resolution taken in his favour.

Marshal von Wrede told me that the King of Bavaria had instructed him to find out from us what country the V^o would prefer to rule over. My brother at the time

Mantua with his French and Italian troops. Although I had not the faintest knowledge of international affairs, this enquiry, coming as it did after a treaty stipulating that the Viceroy was to continue to enjoy sovereign rights, might mean that certain powers wished him to remain in Italy. So far as he was concerned, I was sure that having devoted the best years of his life to organizing the prosperity of that country, he would prefer to spend the rest of his days there, and I designated the Duchy of Milan. The Marshal replied that he was about to send the Viceroy a messenger and he advised me to write to him to proceed immediately to Paris, as this, he said, in the opinion of Prince Metternich, would be greatly to his advantage. In spite of my inexperience in politics, I grasped the fact that Austria, who was more anxious than any other nation to assure her rights in Italy, would be the last country to surrender the smallest portion of that territory to anyone. Consequently if the Austrian minister advised my brother to leave his army and come to Paris, the most advisable policy for Eugène to pursue was the opposite.

Always impulsive and eager to communicate to those I love any ideas which may benefit them, I wrote advising my brother to stay with his army so as to negotiate to better advantage, as I had learned, by what had happened to France, that he who places himself at the mercy of his enemies always has his confidence betrayed. Had not all our fortresses been given up in an instant? Had not the Emperor Napoleon been given up? And but for the Emperor of Russia what would have been his fate, would even his life have been spared?

My letter, full of these reflections, ended thus: "You have upheld your noble reputation to the end. Now think of yourself. Do what you should, what you can, what you dare." I handed this letter to Marshal von Wrede. In those days I was very young. It never occurred to me that one could open a letter. I do not know how far good faith may hold in diplomacy, and if Monsieur von Wrede had been told to trick me. All that I do know is that Monsieur de Metternich, who was under some obligations to me, and who on his arrival in Paris

had talked about coming to see me, never appeared, and that no other Austrian ever called at Malmaison. No doubt it was thought that my advice to my brother was rather outspoken, and the future proved that it was not wide of the mark.

Perhaps it was from this time that people did me the honour to refer to my political influence and to attribute to me an active part that I had never taken. What they did not know was that in spite of the energetic advice I gave my brother I was more delighted with his unselfish conduct than if he had achieved all the material benefits he would have obtained if he had followed it. "The Emperor," my brother said to me afterwards, when we were talking over the matter, "when he renounced the Italian crown stipulated that I was to have a principality. I could not doubt that the Allies would act in good faith and although I could have continued to hold out for a long time in Mantua, I should have reproached myself if I had exposed the life of one single man to serve my private interests. Too much blood had already been spilt, and the fatal incident at Milan proved to me that the Italians were not ready to fight for their independence. Consequently all my efforts would have been solely for my personal ends."

The Emperor Napoleon was about to leave for Elba. I had written to him. He replied and seemed touched that I had been to see the Empress Marie-Louise. He had not for a moment lost his self-possession, and he considered in a perfectly calm manner whether or not he should live on. I have been told, but I have never had any proof of the statement, that he made an attempt to end his days, but that finally he said, "One kills oneself to escape disgrace, one does not kill oneself to escape misfortune."* He smiled sometimes at the insults which were cast at him from every direction. In saying good-bye to those who had remained by his side up till the last moment, he ordered them to be faithful to the interests of France, and not to forget him. But the most touching moment of all, when every eye filled with tears, was when he sent for his eagles, pressed them to his heart, and bade farewell to his

* See Note p 264.

battle flags grown tattered on the fields of glory His last thoughts were all for France's prosperity Monsieur de Flahaut gave me particulars of all that passed at Fontainebleau, and we grieved together over the greatest and noblest of misfortunes

The Duc de Vicenza, having fulfilled his honourable mission, called at Malmaison As French ambassador to Russia he had often had occasion to appreciate the character of the Emperor Alexander and had become much attached to him The Duke reproached me for my cold reception, to which the Emperor had seemed sensible. 'Do you not know,' the Duke said to me, 'that he alone defended the interests of the Imperial family? Without him what might have become of even the life of the Emperor Napoleon You do not realize the hatred of the other sovereigns, how they tried to humiliate him Do you not know that if he still has a refuge on the island of Elba it is thanks to the Russian Emperor?'

A few days later the Emperor Alexander came to Malmaison He spent much of his time with me, playing with my children and taking them on his knees I felt a moment's emotion when I thought, 'An enemy is their only protector'

The Emperor of Russia called again several times and seemed to like to be with us I had opportunities of appreciating the nobility of his conduct, and the sensitiveness of his nature. His chief charm is his hunger for affection He makes you trust him because he shows that he trusts you He is so courtly in the way he seeks to make himself useful to you that you feel he is excusing himself for being indispensable, and I admit that I regretted to have need of him His character attracted me I liked him, and it is distressing to have to accept the good offices of someone you would wish to like for his own sake So I put aside my former constraint and was more natural with him, but when he reverted to money matters in which he wished to take an interest, I turned the conversation He, too, seemed embarrassed, and the subject was pursued no further

One day he said to my mother that, if he thought only

of himself, he would place a palace in Russia at our disposal, but that she would never find a second Malmaison there, nor could my delicate health support the rigours of the climate. Finally he sent for my reader one morning and told her that as we ourselves would not express our wishes it was for our friends to decide what should be done, and that, so far as he was concerned, nothing gave him so much pleasure as to make himself useful to us. The Duc de Vicenza was again instructed to confer with Monsieur de Nesselrode as to what had best be done.

The Comte d'Artois was already in Paris, and everyone crowded round him. Madame de Rémusat, who so shortly before had been lady-in-waiting to the Empress Joséphine, came to Malmaison one morning and gave her to understand that it was advisable for her (my mother) to pay some mark of respect to the family who were about to ascend the French throne. The Empress, she said, would no doubt wish to stay in France, but would this be possible unless she gave some evidence of her adherence to the cause of the Bourbons? She then showed my mother the draft of a letter which she and Monsieur de Talleyrand had drawn up between them, and which she advised my mother to send to the Comte d'Artois. She no doubt counted on the success of her proposal, for rumours of the initiative, so contrary to my mother's dignity, had been widely circulated beforehand.

The letter itself was so ridiculous that it barely concealed its perfidy under the appearances of self-interest. I called my mother's attention to this when we were alone together. She showed it to the Emperor of Russia, who thought it most unseemly, and was indignant about it. The Empress's reply to Madame de Rémusat was dignified and rather disdainful.

Madame de Rémusat came to see me, as she was convinced that I had placed obstacles in the way of her negotiations. She talked about the legitimacy of the dynasty and the impossibility for the Bourbons to ~~recognize anything~~ that had taken place since they had left France. "The Bourbons," I answered, "are free to ~~recognize~~ ~~what~~ and what they please. They are not free to ~~prevent~~ ~~it~~."

happened. If our lofty titles annoy them we can take simpler ones and live quietly in the shade. But we owe it to the nations who made us what we are, to those who sought to serve us loyally, never to deny what we have been. This line of conduct is a duty imposed on us and, as for other people, I can easily conceive that they may overthrow the idol they have raised, but, believe me, it is dishonouring to repudiate it."

She left in great displeasure, and a quantity of tittle-tattle about the price we attached to our titles, about our too visible regrets at the loss of our rank, and the danger that lay in our ambition, began to be circulated in all the drawing-rooms of Paris.

At the time when I had the misfortune to lose Madame de Broc at Aix, Monsieur Sosthènes de la Rochefoucauld had been there with his wife. He had sympathized with my grief and asked to be presented to me. He had married a Mademoiselle de Montmorency, who was very beautiful. Both he and she had been brought up to hate our dynasty. He, however, did not include me in this enmity, and I inspired him with so much confidence that he admitted his attachment to the Bourbons and the resentment he still felt at the exile of Madame de Chevreuse. He continued to come and see me in Paris, but made no effort to secure position at a Court which would have been glad to welcome him.

Madame du Cayla, who like myself, had been brought up at Saint-Germain, and who had always shown me the warmest friendship, shared the opinions of Monsieur de la Rochefoucauld. In spite of recent events they both continued to come to see me, and did not hide the joy they felt at the return of the Bourbons. I thought this feeling very natural. Indeed I myself felt a sort of interest in this family, whose misfortunes had made so deep an impression on me in the days when Madame Campan used to tell me about them. But like the majority of the French people I did not know of how many persons it was composed. The only one known was the Duchesse d'Angoulême. Paris salons spoke of her as of an angel, whose return would bring peace and happiness. Everyone was touched

by the thought of the suffering she had been through, and the memory of her mother was mingled with the romantic attachment she inspired.

Louis XVIII had just arrived at Compiègne, where all who hoped to belong to the new Court hastened to meet him. I chose this moment to go to Paris to set my house in order, and give those who still surrounded me their freedom to seek new situations elsewhere.

The Emperor of Russia learned that I was in Paris and asked Monsieur Tchernycheff to enquire if I would receive him. When he called he said, "I am just back from Compiègne. And I am sad. I love France. I wish her prosperity, and I fear this Bourbon family will not know how to insure it. The King showed me his proclamation. It is dated in the nineteenth year of his reign. I advised him to remove this date, but he did not seem inclined to do so. I foresee that he will alienate many of his supporters, and his is not the kind of régime France needs. I regret it because it seems to be my work. Yet I did propose to Monsieur de Talleyrand to assemble the deputies of the nation that they might draw up a constitution and make definite terms with the Bourbons before any one of them was allowed to enter Paris, but in the first moment of enthusiasm it did not seem as though the Comte d'Artois could get to Paris fast enough to please people. It is not my fault if they are mistaken in their expectations."

I listened to him without wishing to discuss a subject on which I might have said too much, and contented myself with asking particulars about the Duchesse d'Angoulême. "She may have virtues," he answered, "but if you saw her you would change your opinion of her. Even her voice is harsh and she has nothing of a woman's gentleness about her." He afterwards spoke about the Emperor Napoleon, told me how he had loved him, and how deeply he had been wounded when he found out that he had been deceived in him, and that he resented his provocation of this war with Russia doubly, since it estranged him from the friend of Tilsit and of Erfurt, and how, though he did justice to his great qualities, he had sworn never to be reconciled with him. Everything

Tchernycheff told me bore such an impress of truth and straightforwardness that I could not but form a favourable opinion of him. Moreover, he was the only man, Frenchman or foreigner, who spoke of the Emperor Napoleon in a proper way, and I really think that I should have borne a grudge against anyone who had reminded me that this man was the enemy of my family.

About this time my brother came to Paris, having capitulated to the Austrians on honourable terms. He was full of confidence in the independence of his future, assured him by the treaty of April 11th. He had escorted his family to Munich to stay with the King of Bavaria, his father-in-law, and he now came to Paris to thank the allied sovereigns and receive the position that had been promised to him. He was welcomed in every visit he made, and especially by the Emperor Alexander, who was very anxious to know him.

During the only visit he made to the Court of the Bourbons, King Louis XVIII spoke to him of the good my mother had done in France, and the Duc d'Orléans recalled his friendship with my father.* The Duc d'Angoulême paid little attention to my brother, and the Duc de Berry informed him that the French troops were very fine-looking and asked if he had seen any. But generally speaking he was very satisfied with the way he had been received.

My brother had not been in Paris long before he became aware that the execution of the treaty so far as he was concerned, was very difficult. No one knew where to place him, everyone had claims on each place proposed for him. My mother's sole wish was to see her son suitably established, but the only person who supported her was the Emperor of Russia. We found ourselves in a most extraordinary position with regard to him. The friendship he showed us and that we felt for him precluded any idea of either of us acting from selfish motives. He seemed embarrassed to be our protector when it was he who had brought about the change in our fortunes, and he could never take pains enough to make himself useful to us without hurting our pride. We, who appreciated all his tact,

* See Note p. 264

could not remember the troubles he had brought upon us, because so much kindness forced us to forget it; but, for more than one reason, it was distressing to depend on him for a position.

Whenever the Emperor of Russia came to see me in Paris or at Malmaison it was difficult to avoid bringing up the subject of business. It was decided between him and the Duc de Vicenza and Monsieur de Nesselrode that a duchy should be created for me out of the income of four hundred thousand francs, the sum fixed by the treaty of April 11, coming from the forests near Saint-Leu, which a decree of the Emperor Napoleon had allocated to me several years before. Thus my children would have a fortune more firmly assured them than that which was mentioned in the treaty of April 11th. This duchy, which the Allies asked should be given me, gave me a title better suited to my present rank, and at the same time did not deprive me of that which the treaty itself declared was non-revocable. I should be able to stay near my mother and my friends, in my native land. How many reasons were there for accepting what was offered me! I gave my consent without asking my husband's approval, believing that he would be satisfied that his children received such a compensation after all they had lost.* He could do nothing for them himself. Should he not rejoice that chance had placed me in a position to assure them a home in their own country and to provide against their wandering about, obliged perhaps to make their way in life, far from the land where they were born? It was true I did not yet know how fierce political passions could be. I could never have imagined one could hate little children of their age. Otherwise should I have decided to let those who were dearer to me than anything on earth remain in the midst of so many enemies?

The estate of Saint-Leu belonged jointly to me and my husband, but when the latter left Holland the Emperor had intended to make it over entirely to me. I refused, not wishing to take advantage of the King's absence to despoil him of his property. Nevertheless, as I did not own any other estate, and as my husband had writte

* See Note p 265.

from Gratz that Saint-Leu belonged to me, it was decided that it was there that the duchy should be created. The Prince de Condé had resumed the ownership of the neighbouring woods, of which I had had possession, but which formerly had belonged to him, but I still retained those of Ermenonville and of Ile-Adam, which were to form part of the duchy. The rest of the four hundred thousand francs was to consist, as agreed, in government securities.

While these various negotiations were going on, the Emperor of Russia naturally heard Saint-Leu frequently mentioned and wished to see the place. We fixed a date on which to go as a family party and spend the day there with him—my mother, my brother and myself. The only other person was the Maréchale Ney, whom the Emperor treated with favour, as he did her husband. The Emperor drove up in a little barouche accompanied only by Monsieur Tchernycheff. During luncheon* he remarked to me "Do you know that there is a solemn service being celebrated in Paris to-day in honour of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie-Antoinette? All the foreign sovereigns are supposed to attend and as we drove out here I called Tchernycheff's attention to the curious position in which I find myself. I came to Paris filled with animosity against your family, and it is only in their company that I enjoy spending my time. I have injured you. I have benefited others, but it is only with you that I find affection. In short, I ought to be at Paris to-day with the other kings, and here I am at Saint-Leu." We continued to converse about the strangeness of human life, and after luncheon we all walked in the forest. As we passed certain spots where I had had improvements made, and which I pointed out with considerable pride, the Emperor remarked sadly, "None of this still belongs to you." He seemed so sorry to think that it was he who was responsible for the grief I probably felt that I answered gaily, "I shall always be able to enjoy it."

We remained till quite late in the park. My mother retired to the château, and while my young ladies played different games in the shadow of the trees, I walked alone with the Emperor. He told me of the high opinion he

* See Note p. 265.

had formed of me because of my courage in bearing so many losses without seeming afflicted by them. I replied that it was less credit to me not to be saddened by such reverses since I had never really enjoyed my brilliant state and could not regret deeply a thing about which I had never cared particularly. I added that, although I was quite indifferent about many things, there were others which touched me deeply. Thereupon I proceeded to describe some of the saddest experiences I had gone through whose bitterness had so destroyed my peace of mind that I was constantly expecting some new misfortune to fall on me, and when it was not one which touched my affections, I felt thankful. This condition had persisted since my son's death. My health had been profoundly affected, and the recent loss of Madame de Broc, that friend of my childhood, had revived all my sorrows and my dread of the future. The Emperor listened most attentively to even the slightest detail of my narrative, and was as moved by my eulogy of my friend as though he had known her. He interrupted me often by saying, "But you still have friends. I have not met anyone of any party who has not spoken well of you. You are unjust towards Providence and you do not trust enough in the loving-kindness of God." He in turn related some of the sorrows that had saddened his life. He assured me that he had always found prayer a great consolation, and that he placed his hopes in God. He told me this incident: "When we were at the gates of Paris all the generals believed we ought not to attempt to take the city, as the Emperor Napoleon had outflanked us and cut us off from all our supplies. If Paris had resisted twenty-four hours, we might all have been lost. Alone, holding out against everyone, I persisted in favour of an attack. In this moment of cruel perplexity I withdrew to my own apartment. I realized the grave responsibility which rested on me. I prayed earnestly to God, then, full of confidence, I no longer doubted of our success."

Imagine what my feelings were on hearing this! I learned that the fate of France, the overthrow of the Emperor, had only been a question of luck, and that the

Emperor and France had been on the point of emerging from the struggle more glorious and greater than ever. But the opportunity had passed and we must resign ourselves. I sought to suppress my emotions and continued our conversation. I admitted that my misfortunes had disturbed my faith. To be sure I could not doubt the goodness of God, but, when still very young, I had persuaded myself that God sends afflictions only to punish sin. I had been dealt blows so cruel that I could not believe that I had deserved them. And this had changed the current of my thoughts. I enjoyed doing good because it made me happy. All people who were unfortunate aroused my sympathy because I knew what it was to suffer, but deprived of any aim or any guide in this life I only looked for rest and consolation in the hereafter. The Emperor opposed my ideas eagerly, saying that they were pessimistic, and he repeated to me several times. "Trust in God. He does not abandon those who love Him. I have had cruel experiences in my own life," he added "but my conscience, which justified me in the sight of God fortified me always. I brought Him my troubles and He comforted me. He could, no doubt, justly reproach me for a certain fault which I feel I have not the power to resist. Yet I still place my trust in Him." He then went on to give me some details of his domestic life, and of the happiness he had found in a love, illegitimate it is true, but which in the eighteen years it had lasted he had come to consider sacred. He spoke of his children, described the woman he loved, and when his wife was mentioned he said, "Although any reunion is impossible between us, she has no better friend than me." The games were finished. We were awaited and went back into the château.

In spite of the goodwill of which the Emperor gave us constant proofs, my mother, who was still sad and depressed, could not calm her anxiety regarding my brother's future. I promised her that I would overcome my embarrassment and speak to the Emperor Alexander about this, but she herself after dinner had an interview with him which seemed to relieve her mind.

When he was on the point of leaving us the Emperor told me that nowhere had he felt so much at home as in my house. Elsewhere wherever he went he met with a formal atmosphere which oppressed him. Instead of this, when he was with us he felt as though he were at home. I explained that the flattering opinion he had formed was due to the unceremonious style of my drawing-room and the care everyone took not to overwhelm him with attentions. He left at nine o'clock in the evening, and my mother and I returned to Malmaison the following day.

I heard that at the newly constituted Court this intimacy of ours with the Emperor of Russia was very much criticized. Monsieur Sosthènes de la Rochefoucauld came and told me how shocked everyone had been at the date I had chosen to hold a reception for the Emperor Alexander. I replied that neither my means nor my position allowed me to give a reception, that the date had been chosen a long time in advance, and that the entire affair had been a purely informal one and not such as ought to shock anyone. He then confessed that my mother's great popularity had given umbrage at Court and that it was rumoured that she was having funds distributed among the working-classes. I smiled at such stories, and told him the following incident. "While we were at Blois the Emperor's treasure-chest was in danger of being captured. It was therefore judged advisable to pay over to the persons present the sums due to them, especially as the Treasury Department was behindhand with its payments. A sum of 600,000 francs was deposited with a local banker on behalf of my mother and myself. This represented only a part of what was due to us. A few days later the Duc d'Angoulême, while passing through the town, seized that deposit which was our legitimate property, paid his soldiers with it, and we have never seen a penny of it since. The rest of the Emperor's private funds were handed over to the Provisional Government." By way of conclusion to this story, I said to Monsieur de la Rochefoucauld, "You see how plausible it is that my mother, who is known not to have any money of her own, should distribute money to the discontented elements of the population."

I do not know if what I said convinced him, but I noticed that all the signs of sympathy which the aristocratic class had previously given us gave place to an extreme animosity. Jealousy had a great deal to do with it. The Emperor of Russia cut a great figure in the eyes of the old nobility, whose vanity led them to believe themselves the only persons worthy of his notice, while he, on the contrary, seemed to find more pleasure in the society of the very people he had come to overthrow. A pretty state of affairs! So all sorts of stories got about regarding meetings of conspirators at Malmaison, where the royal family was spoken against and a malicious interpretation was placed on the Emperor of Russia's frequent visits. Even his own ministers became alarmed and spoke to him about it, but this did not prevent the visits continuing as before.

One day when my mother was not very well and could not go out, my brother and I took the Emperor Alexander to see the famous water-works at Marly. On the way there we discussed the general subject of friendship, and we referred to that which united Eugène and me. The Emperor also spoke feelingly about the union which existed in his own family, and then turning to my brother he added, "I can hardly believe that I have only known your sister such a short time. She seems to me to be someone I am meeting again, and whom I knew in the past. I feel every sort of trust in her."

I thanked him for this tribute and assured him that it was what could please me most. Then the conversation changed, we spoke of the recent campaign, and he explained to my brother the reasons which had delayed the troops marching by way of Troyes for twenty four hours, that delay of which the Emperor Napoleon took advantage to beat the two armies separately at Montmirail.

The Emperor Alexander had questioned me about the Empress's divorce. I read him a few pages I had written at the time it took place, as well as my letters to Madame de Broc, which had been returned to me after her death. He seemed deeply touched by my mother's fate, and said he could not conceive why the Emperor Napoleon had not adopted my brother.

It was with Monsieur de Blacas, one of the King's cabinet ministers, that Monsieur de Nesselrode negotiated the arrangements that concerned us. He asked my reader, Mademoiselle Cochelet, to let me know that everything had been concluded, and the duchy duly created. The paper containing the contract was sent to me, but it was couched in terms so unbecoming that I decided to refuse everything.* I could not forget who I was, and if the King of France chose to do so I was not prepared to receive any favours from him. I was willing to take another title, but I would only agree to do so as being entitled to a new one by right, not as a disavowal of the one I held. My reader took my reply and my refusal to Monsieur de Nesselrode. The advice of the Duc de Vicenza was asked. The Emperor Alexander declared that he demanded other letters patent, drawn up in terms which I could accept. He rebuked Monsieur de Nesselrode severely for not having shown him the first draft before it was sent to me and presented profuse apologies to me for what had taken place.

This is what was finally stipulated. As the treaty of April 11th conserved all our titles, the letters patent should be drawn up in accordance with that treaty and refer to me as Queen Hortense. The duchy of Saint-Leu was bestowed on me.* My children were to inherit it after my death, and their father to have no right to it whatsoever. I still hesitated fearing lest the hostility which I felt arising against me might disturb my children's life in France, but the love of country and my mother's grief at the thought of our being separated decided me. I gave the Duc de Vicenza full power of attorney to sign such terms as would conciliate my children's material interest with what I felt I owed to my position and the name I bore.

It distressed me to note that the Empress's continued sadness was affecting her health. Although the constant demonstrations of affection she received seemed to dispel her sorrow for a moment, her eyes would fill again with tears as soon as she was alone with me. The picture of the Emperor cast down from his throne and confined to the

* See Note p 265

isle of Elba was constantly before her eyes, and tore her heart. She sought out everyone who had belonged to him, even the young Polish lady of whom she had been so jealous. She enjoyed seeing her, believing that she must share her sentiments. Nor was she less troubled about my brother's future, and even her own fate was a source of perpetual anxiety. The treaty of April 11th had stipulated that she was to receive one-third of her previous income. Nevertheless she was obliged to dismiss more than half the members of her household. Her servants came and wept round her. She had not the courage to dismiss these faithful attendants, and ended by keeping them all. In another quarter there was the problem of the pensions which she gave annually. Where could she find nearly three hundred thousand francs? How many people she must make unhappy! Moreover, her too great liberality had caused her to contract a large number of debts that she set her heart on paying. Would her diamonds provide enough money to do this? In the midst of all these worries her kindness, her graciousness, the charm of her manner had not altered in the least.

Of all those who owed their life to her intervention the Marquis de Rivière was the only person who came to see her. Monsieur de Polignac, whose life she had saved and to obtain whose pardon she had thrown herself at the Emperor's knees, did not even pay her a courtesy call. The first proofs of ingratitude are always painful. One regrets to have to complain of the conduct of those for whom one had been glad to do a favour.* Many Frenchmen, having made the one call which they doubtless felt to be indispensable, did not again appear at Malmaison. Their attentions were offered elsewhere. Only foreigners and those Frenchmen whose feelings did not change with changing fortunes continued to come with the same regularity.

The Emperor of Russia was about to hold a review of his troops. He invited my brother to attend it. Eugène asked to be excused, adding he would have accepted with pleasure anywhere except in France. The Emperor took his hand in a most friendly manner, saying, 'I

* See Note p. 265.

quite understand. Excuse me for having invited you." This is an example of the Emperor's really feminine thoughtfulness; it was this refinement of feeling that made him so attractive. He understood one's feelings and seemed even to appreciate the reserve one displayed towards him, since he was conscious of the motives which prompted this reserve. The reason for my brother's refusal was doubtless the same as that which prevented Monsieur de Flahaut not only from going to call on the Emperor of Russia but even from meeting him at our house. Monsieur de Flahaut admitted all the Emperor of Russia's qualities, recognized the gratitude that I owed to him, but continued to think of him as an enemy of France, whom he would rather not see. And yet the majority of the generals found in the Emperor Alexander a defender against the new order that was coming into effect.

The Russian Grand Dukes had just come to Paris accompanied by their tutor.* The Emperor Alexander sent them to spend a day at Malmaison. Their elder brother, the Grand Duke Constantin,* had already been several times to Malmaison. He told us that throughout France he had only heard kind things said about my mother and myself. He was most anxious to have a collection of the songs I had composed and had had engraved for some of my family circle. I gave him a copy.* The original manuscript I gave to the Emperor Alexander, and it is now preserved at the palace of the Hermitage.

The King of Prussia and all his family came to Malmaison on the same day as the Grand Duke Constantin. My mother, who was already far from well, made an effort and came downstairs to receive them. She seemed only to have a cold, and her health was generally so perfect that no one felt the least alarm. Even I was quiet enough in my mind to go to Paris to attend to some business. The Emperor of Russia, hearing I was there, came to see me. He had just been dining with the King of France.* He could not help laughing about what he had seen, the length of the repast and the extreme pleasure everyone seemed to take in it. He even went as far as to say, "What a change in the inhabitants of the Tuileries;

* See Note p 265

it was a great man who lived there not so very long ago, whereas to-day " He did not conclude his sentence, and I judged it more seemly to change the subject

My brother came from Malmaison, where he had left my mother feeling more unwell. She had been much distressed by a newspaper article which spoke of my son who had died in Holland and who had been buried temporarily in Notre-Dame while waiting for his tomb at Saint-Denis to be finished. The paper declared in offensive terms that the body was about to be taken from its present sepulchre and put into the public cemetery. In order not to wound my feelings an effort had been made to keep the article out of my sight, but in the end I was obliged to read it to enable me to claim the safeguard of the precious remains.* I confess what hurt me the most in the whole matter was to discover how much hatred there was in the heart of those to whom the destinies of my native land were entrusted from this time. I cannot conceive of a jealousy that can go as far as to insult the remains of an innocent child, because in the past he had been the object of certain hopes. Ought not a being whom an entire nation has loved even for an instant to receive more respectful treatment? There can be neither policy nor dignity in the violation of a tomb. It is an outrage on the sentiment of a nation and on a mother's heart. But for my own part, far from grieving unduly at the idea of a possible transfer of the remains, I thought that the result might be that I should have my child's body at Saint-Leu, near me, and that there he, at any rate, would be sheltered from hatred. I merely pitied any political party that could yield to such a paltry spirit of vengeance that even a grave was not sacred, and I foresaw to what lengths such feelings might drive it. I was told, and I prefer to believe, that neither the King nor any of his family had anything to do with this episode.

I at once went to my mother, whom I found very low and still thinking a good deal about the effect that this newspaper article might have on me. I noticed that she spoke with difficulty. Her doctor asserted that she had only a touch of fever,* that I was wrong to be anxious, that it was

* See Note p. 263.

nothing more than a cold, that her pulse was better than mine—for just then I was threatened with consumption, and my health gave great anxiety to my friends. I did not leave my mother. I looked at her and saw that her breathing became more and more laboured. I sent for her doctor, and after a long discussion finally persuaded him to place a blister on her neck. Reassured at having taken this precaution, I felt as if I had won a victory, and ill myself I went to bed. I expected that the blister would have produced a healthy reaction by the morning. It had acted, to be sure, but I was astonished to find that my mother's cough had become much drier. I learned later that she had taken a glass of Seidlitz water, hoping to relieve the oppression in her chest, and this I presume was what had caused the more intense irritation. In vain the doctor, to reassure me, persisted in saying that it was nothing but a cold. I wanted to send for my own physician, and fearing to alarm my mother I said that he was coming to see me, but that I should be glad if she would allow him to examine her at the same time.

"No, no," she replied, "I don't want to see any other doctor. It would hurt my own physician's feelings." I did not dare press the point. My mother had always enjoyed such excellent health that I refused even to admit to myself that she was in the least danger, and yet at the same time I could not shake off a vague apprehension. In the course of the day (May 27th, 1814), the Emperor of Russia sent us his head physician. Although quite exhausted, my mother received him with her customary graciousness. "I beg you to express my thanks to the Emperor of Russia. I trust his sympathy will bring me good luck."

The Emperor Alexander was to have come to dine the following day. My mother settled the smallest details that might increase his comfort, and expected to be well enough to get up. But when the doctor was leaving he could not conceal from us what his manner had already told us, namely, that he found her very ill, and he recommended that she be covered with blisters.

Terror-stricken, I sent for the best doctors in Pa ·

and now, to crown all my anxieties, a very high fever obliged my brother to take to his bed. Misfortunes surrounded me on every hand, but instead of giving way to my grief I was stimulated by the thought that I must concentrate all my strength and will-power on those who needed my care.

I was just about to ask the Emperor to postpone the dinner till another day when he arrived very early. I received him, informed him of my fears, and took him to my brother, with whom we arranged that his presence should be kept from my mother lest she should be worried thinking that he had not been properly entertained. I returned to her bedside. I told her that the Emperor had sent word asking to be excused and saying that he would come another time. "I am sure," she said, "that the reason he did not come was because he felt embarrassed at having nothing new to report about your brother's affairs. That must be what has kept him away." I replied that I was convinced that our affairs would be arranged satisfactorily in the end, and she repeated several times, "You must take it on yourself to speak to the Emperor of Russia about your brother's position. He alone feels well-disposed towards us. Are we going to let him leave before anything is decided?"

The physicians dreaded to tell me the truth. They only said that the illness would be a long one. I arranged the service, so that I, her attendants and mine would in turn spend a night with her. My physician and my maid began. During the day a sort of feverish energy had sustained me. I was constantly going from my mother's room to my brother's, where the Emperor, who did not leave us till evening, was keeping him company.

I stayed by my mother till late. I had brought my children in to say good-night to her. She had sent them away at once, saying, "The air is not good in here. It might harm them."

She also insisted that I should leave the room and made such a point of it that the doctor finally induced me to go and take a little rest. It was impossible for me to sleep. The habit of misfortune seemed to



By Apollon.

Belonging to Prince Napoleon

JOSEPHINE

threaten me with the most fearful misfortune of all, and at times I would force myself to turn my mind away and concentrate on other things, as though to escape from some gloomy spectre born of my alarm. Twice I got up to go into my mother's apartment. My maid told me I need not be anxious. She was resting quietly, and yet she uttered at times unconnected words, "Bonaparte. . . the isle of Elba. . . The King of Rome."

The next day, May 29th, was Pentecost. My brother, who had left his bed in spite of his fever, went to my mother's room with me while it was still early. As she caught sight of us she stretched out her arms and spoke a few words which we could not understand. She seemed quite distraught. A few hours later I found such a change in her that, for the first time, the terrible knowledge that I was about to lose her entered my mind. I was unable to control my despair. My attendants carried me into the next room. My brother informed me that the sacraments had been sent for, but that nevertheless the doctors had not given up all hope.* We went together to hear Mass and pray for that life which was so dear to us. Tears streamed from everyone's eyes, and all those about us seemed to share our grief.

I went upstairs again to my mother, summoning up all my courage to speak to her quietly of the sacrament she was about to receive and thus prevent her experiencing too great an emotion when the moment came, and instil confidence into her by showing it myself. And in truth I still had some hope. But when, on entering her room, I saw the marked change that had come over her features in less than a half-hour, I was unable to say a word, or even to take the hand she stretched out to me. I sank down unconscious beside her bed, and was carried into my own room. What took place I cannot say. A few moments later my brother hastened to me, took me in his arms, and bursting into tears, exclaimed, "All is over." She had received the sacraments with the greatest calm, and her last sigh was doubtless for the misfortunes of children.

A moment later my room was filled i ose

* See Note p 266.

women who like myself had just lost a mother. They came to mingle their tears with ours, and it is impossible to describe the despair that reigned about us. How intense was everyone's sorrow! How do we live through such troubles? The carriages having been brought up, I was taken to Saint-Leu*. I cannot tell what is the melancholy charm that lingers about the place where one has just suffered a loss. But in leaving it you seem to part a second time from everything you regret. It was not till I arrived at Saint-Leu that I realized my affliction. Such violent and tragic emotions as those through which I had just passed brought on an absolutely unbearable nervous headache. I was unable to leave my bed. My brother, alarmed at my condition, nursed me with a tenderness to which I was not accustomed. For the first time in my life I found by my side someone on whom I could call for comfort and support in my hour of distress. I appreciated this deeply and my broken heart was grateful to Providence for not having deprived me of everything. Sorrow shared is softened and becomes easier to bear. From every side marks of sympathy arrived. The foreign sovereigns who were in Paris and even the French royal family expressed their regret. The Emperor of Russia more than anyone else showed us a sympathy at which we could not feel surprised. He wished to attend my mother's funeral in person. My children went, but as we had not the courage to go ourselves we sent word to the Emperor, who sent General Sacken to represent him*.

When he left Paris he came to spend a day at my country house at Saint-Leu, going on from thence to England. He had asked us to have a room prepared for him quite informally, and arrived at night. The next morning at ten o'clock my brother brought him into my room. I was too ill to have been able to get up. They both breakfasted beside my bed. The Emperor was in mourning as we were. He seemed to feel our sorrow, and share our loss. I believed that I had found a second brother at the moment when Providence had smitten me with such a fatal loss. Our conversation was sad. The Emperor accused himself of being in part responsible for our misfortune, which

* See Note p. 266.

he attributed to my mother's grief over what had taken place. The more he seemed to us to be right the more anxiously we tried to refute his arguments. He described how the Emperor of Austria had heard of my mother's death. In the morning as he was going out alone he met a man of the people in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, who accosted him, not knowing who he was, and said, "Ah, Sir! Have you heard the sad news? The good Empress Joséphine is dead!" So wide-spread was the grief for her.*

The Emperor Alexander received several messengers during the day he spent with us. He wrote despatches and walked about with my brother. I dressed and came downstairs and we all dined in my little drawing-room. He should have left that same evening, but, I heard since, that he wished to be sure before his departure that the question of the letters patent creating the Duchy of Saint-Leu had been satisfactorily arranged. The King had strongly objected to signing them on account of their reference to me under the title of Queen, and the Emperor of Russia had been obliged to say that his troops would remain in Paris until these letters had been sent. He received them in the course of the evening, but did not wish to hand them to me himself. He felt that they had lost their value to me since she by whose side they were intended to fix me was no more. He sent for my reader and told her that when it would be possible to discuss business with me, she was to tell me I need not make any acknowledgment or express my thanks in any way to the King of France, as he (the Emperor of Russia) was exceedingly annoyed at the reluctance that had been shown in arranging the matter, and that I must not expose myself to a possible rebuff.

The Duc de Vicenza came in in the evening and informed us that the King had at last signed the treaty of April 11th, but that this was due to the powerful intervention of the Emperor of Russia. The Duke had at once, with the permission of the government, dispatched one of the Emperor Napoleon's servants to convey this news to him at Elba.

* See Note p. 267.

The Emperor of Russia spent that night also at Saint-Leu, and left for England very early the next morning, after arranging to meet Eugène at the Vienna Congress.

My brother and I both wished to write to the Emperor Napoleon to inform him of our recent loss, but the messenger of the Duc de Vicenza had already left, and we could not obtain permission to send another. I was most anxious also to let him know how my personal affairs had been arranged, but the Duc de Vicenza told me he had already done this, and that after having rendered an account of the negotiations to the Emperor he had added, "As for Queen Hortense, suitable provision for her and her children has been arranged in France." His letters were carried by a servant, who was going to Elba. It was no longer possible to write, as all correspondence with the Emperor had been forbidden. Therefore we thought it best to wait till matters had become calmer.

In the first days that followed our bereavement all Paris came to see me. So much sympathy with us was likely to make the government uneasy, and we already knew that it was far from being kindly disposed towards us. My brother felt the disadvantages of a prolonged stay in France, and wished to conclude our affairs and return to Munich.*

CHAPTER XIV

THE FIRST RESTORATION (CONTINUED)

JUNE 1, 1814—MARCH 4, 1815

Eugène's departure—Louis protests against the treaty of April 11th, 1814—Visit from Madame de Staël and Madame Récamier—Life at Plombières and at Baden-Baden—Hortense returns to France—Audience with Louis XVIII—Louis Bonaparte claims his elder son from Hortense—Lawsuit against Hortense—The Queen's lawyers—Some English visitors—The Queen's drawing-room

My brother felt every day that he ought to leave Paris.* Workmen from the suburbs had made a demonstration in front of the Tuileries and demanded work in a peremptory manner. We heard that among their protests Eugène's name had been pronounced. It was necessary for me to face this separation that would deprive me of my sole moral support. I felt as though in leaving me my brother took with him all the protection offered by one's native land, and that I was about to find myself amid strangers, surrounded by pitfalls and pursued by calumny. The country of my birth, where no one had a complaint or reproach to make against me, where my family had sought to do good to everyone, had changed and become for me an enemy country.

I will not be so unjust to those rare friends who have always remained faithful to me as to say that I forgot their presence, but how could they sustain me? Their very zeal was sometimes indiscreet.

As my health was in need of water-cure, it was agreed between my brother, his wife and myself that we should all meet at Aix-en-Savoie. I wished my children to accompany me, but the advice of the Duc de Vicenza and several

* See Note p. 268

other people versed in political matters was that it was better for them not to leave France so soon after having been granted the right to remain in the country. Such an absence might serve as a pretext for violating the engagements which had been made regarding them and for preventing their return. It would be wiser to accustom people to see no inconvenience to their presence in France.

About this time the newspapers published a protest from my husband, who refused, in his own name and that of his sons, the conditions of the treaty of April 11th. He also had the records which had been made when he left Holland printed. They were the same, I believe, as those he had sent by Monsieur Decazes to the Senate and the *Corps Législatif*. Among these papers was included the letter to me, which the Emperor had never given me, but had mentioned when he expressed his displeasure at seeing a French father refuse the style of French princes for his sons. In this letter my husband forbade me to receive anything from his brother and turned over to me as sole sources of income his private estates in France and Holland. Estates which did not pay expenses in one country and were of no account in the other.

I confess that I thought it extraordinary that my husband should choose the moment of his brother's fall to glorify himself at the Emperor's expense. Was it not misplaced pride to inform the public what terms he had refused at the time of his abdication, since everything he ever possessed had been given him by his brother? Besides, though man is master of his fate he is so only of his own destiny. Would not his children some day be justified in reproaching him for having deprived them of the noble style of French princes, and of the advantages inseparable from such titles? It was this renunciation which the Emperor had said was madness, and it was on his opinion (so valuable in my eyes) that I based my resistance to my husband when he now asked me to send him his children, or at least his elder son. His point of view did not give me confidence as to their future. I might be mistaken, for, in questions of policy, only the result proves whether one has been right or wrong.

and the result could not be foreseen. I wrote my husband that I would be pleased to take his children often to see him, but I begged him not to deprive them of the future and the nationality which I had assured for them.

From London I received a charming letter written by the Emperor of Russia. Doubtless he did not wish his ambassador to know that he was writing, for the mail had been placed directly in the hands of Monsieur Boutiaguine, secretary of the embassy. The secretary warned me that, judging by a remark Monsieur Pozzo di Borgo had made, the latter had noticed this lack of confidence in him and had been offended by it. Thus it came about that he began to fear the person he was supposed to protect and later came to desire to injure her.

The enthusiasm aroused by the return of peace had given way to a general dissatisfaction. So far no one had real cause to complain, but the way in which some people were made much of at court and certain others were neglected showed that, in future, the privileged class would consist of a little group made up of men who for twenty-five years had done nothing useful to their country, or else had borne arms against her. The hope of peace, and above all of liberty, had caused the Bourbons to be received with open arms, but already the prospect of liberty was compromised by various actions of their government. Everyone laughed at certain old-fashioned customs that they attempted to revive. The princes had amused themselves by conducting a mimic war just outside Paris. This was considered an unseemly parody of the sad and sanguinary events from the effects of which the capital was still suffering. The Duc de Berri believed he could, by an air of petulant ill-humour, imitate the Emperor's grave severity, and he shocked people's feelings by his attitude. The more the government felt it was losing the nation's confidence the more it became suspicious and the more mistakes it made.

I had praised the waters of Aix-en-Savoie highly to the Empress Marie-Louise, and she obtained permission to go there. A great fluttering of the doves both in the police department and at Court was caused by this journey of a woman who seemed to them to threaten to recapture

what she had not known how to keep ! I had made no secret of my plan of meeting my brother at Aix, and Monsieur Boutiguine informed me that this reunion looked suspicious to the French Court. Even Monsieur de Blacas, one of the King's cabinet ministers, had told him that he would be pleased if I changed my plans and thus showed my desire not to make the Bourbons suspicious. I consented at once to do this and wrote to my brother that I was going to Plombières.

Before I left Paris, Madame de Staël and Madame Récamier asked to be allowed to call and thank me for the efforts I had made to have their sentence of exile remitted. Although the Emperor had not acceded to my request they were none the less grateful. They came one morning accompanied by Prince Auguste of Prussia. Madame de Staël asked me many questions about the Emperor, spoke of going to see him on the Isle of Elba, and wished to know in detail everything he had said about her. I told her that he had judged her severely, but had been indulgent towards Madame Récamier, whose exile doubtless he would have shortly suspended. She could not conceal her satisfaction at the distinction he made and hastened to call her friend over to tell her what she had just heard. She repeated it with a great deal of emphasis, as much as to say, "You are only a child. People did not think you of importance, whereas they were afraid of me." Then she turned to me and said complacently, "Really, you don't think he would have ever let me return to France ?"

Madame de Staël possessed a great deal of charm when she managed to remain feminine, but her self-assured manner in discussion and her dogmatic attitude natural enough in the case of such a superior mind, in short, her masculine ways, made her appear to me far less attractive than I had expected. When I looked at her I thought that, in order to have inspired so many passions as she had done, either men's love must often be a question of vanity or else she must be endowed with those rare qualities of the heart which alone inspire and retain affection.

She was very intimate with Madame Récamier. Her fine brain and her mental superiority over all other members

that was truly royal. Her features were distinguished, and it was evident that she must have been very beautiful. Her voice had an inexpressible charm and her melancholy air made her particularly attaching. The Queen of Bavaria, her sister, resembled her in many respects. I have always found her so kind and sympathetic that I should not be speaking impartially if I expressed all my admiration for her.

The German princesses were not wanting in affability, but in general they are not natural enough. After you have once met them you always find them exactly the same. Most of them are not aware that lofty rank demands simplicity, that kindness is a ruler's greatest charm just as an active charity is his first duty. Generally, they are too much in bondage to the rules of etiquette. While, of course, a certain amount of formality and reserve is necessary at court, where lack of restraint would set a bad example, still in domestic circles all constraint should be abolished and greater ease and simplicity be made the rule.

I left at the end of August to return to Saint-Leu. I again bade farewell to my brother, who went to Vienna to claim vainly that position which the treaties had stipulated he was to receive, while I, instead of enjoying that peace which I so desired, was about to find myself again in the midst of intrigues, plots and dangers of every description.

I arrived at Saint-Leu without further incidents, but only stayed there a few days. My doctors had ordered me to take sea baths after the waters. I left for Le Havre, again accompanied only by one lady. I preserved the strictest incognito and was rather annoyed at first not to be able to find a room except in a second-rate inn, filled with English people. But luck favoured me. I had told my footman to go and knock at all the doors on the quay to see if there was not a house to let. The first place he went to he encountered an old couple who were about to leave for their country-place and who, without knowing who I was, agreed to rent their house on my servant's giving them his word that we were respectable people.

I spent two very quiet weeks there, taking my baths, going for walks, reading, all entirely alone. One day I was invited by my landlords to take tea with them in the country. The flower-beds and drawing-room were filled with hortensias. They praised the flower and spoke of the queen whom it had been named after.

I had not yet been recognized, but soon rumours of my presence caused my old couple to call. They were much upset, fearing they had been frightfully impolite and begging my pardon. I at once put them at their ease and they informed me that this house was the same one where I had lived at the age of four with my mother when she was about to sail for Martinique. Chance had brought me back to it twenty-six years later. How many things had taken place in the meantime! How many events, happy and unhappy, had occurred to both my country and myself! I was even introduced to the captain who had commanded our ship. This coincidence delighted my hosts, who had become my friends, and I, too, thought it very curious.

I went back to Saint-Leu,* resolved not to leave it any more but to devote myself entirely to my children's education. I felt a sort of satisfaction at the thought that, in the midst of their misfortune, they would at least acquire a firmly grounded education far from the flatteries and distractions of the Court and in a situation which required a man to depend on his own ability and develop what talents he may possess.

The weather was marvellous. I had regained some of my strength and, after so many vicissitudes, felt that the moment of tranquillity to which I felt I was entitled, had come at last. It did not last long. One morning a young man, Monsieur Briatte, presented himself. He was stiff in his manner, abrupt in his speech, convinced of his own importance, and thoroughly suited to the negotiation which he had been instructed to carry out. Formerly my husband's private secretary in Holland, Monsieur Briatte had, through his protection, obtained a post as referendary at the Audit Department of the Treasury in Paris, and kept up a correspondence with him. He had been instructed to come and claim my elder son from me, as the boy's father

* See Note p 268

insisted absolutely on having him. He even pointed out his rectitude in leaving me the younger child. The tone of the letter which demanded that the child be confided to Monsieur Briatte was threatening. This blow stunned me. Although I had feared it for a long time, it fell on me as though from a clear sky. My whole life revolved around my children, it was for them that I sought to regain my health, for them I still struggled to keep alive. The thought of these loved beings was the only thing that sustained me amid all my tribulations. The idea of being separated from them filled me with terror. I wished to reason coolly but I could only feel. I foresaw all the dangers that threatened my son if he left my side. Would not his father's ill-health lead him to neglect the child's education and the formation of his character? Would not even the boy's own health suffer and his natural good disposition become altered? My mind and heart were so completely at one in this dilemma that I took the grave step of refusing my husband's demands. Daily I summoned up my will power. Daily I fixed my mind on the idea of resisting his wishes, because I felt it was my duty to do so. It was simple enough for me to point out that my son ought to remain in France and that his personal interest lay in his staying on in his native land. I emphasized this point. I also wrote to my husband that I was willing to take his children to see him. I implored him not to ruin their future but to seek to make it as happy a one as possible. It was with anxiety that I awaited his answer, which it seemed to me would be a question of life and death to me.

Having finished my period of deep mourning, I thought of expressing my thanks to the king for having granted me permission to remain in France and for having created a duchy which my children would eventually inherit. To be sure, the Emperor of Russia had told me I should not do this in view of the hostile attitude which Louis XVIII's ministers and the king himself had shown in regard to the issuance of the letters patent. At the same time I felt that I was under the obligation of making him a visit. He had become the ruler of that France where I intended to spend

the rest of my life as a private citizen, where I had no one to protect me, and where I felt myself surrounded with malevolent intrigues and perils of all sorts. Already I felt that people were looking at me with suspicion and I thought the best way to prevent their having any pretext for adopting this attitude was to pay the King a visit of courtesy. To do this was less disagreeable to me than my friends imagined, for I felt I was doing right. If I received a cold reception the fault would not be mine. Moreover, I had decided to withdraw if anyone was in the least rude to me.

I asked for a private audience. My request was granted without the least difficulty. The following morning* at eleven o'clock I presented myself accompanied by a lady-in-waiting. I had asked Monsieur Lavallette to act as my escort. I was ushered into the throne-room, where I had so often waited in the past. Nothing had been changed. The N's and the eagles were everywhere. I was less troubled by so many memories than one might have thought, for then, as always, I was convinced that happiness was not the lot of those who dwell in palaces.

The Duchess of Devonshire* was ushered into the hall where I was. She asked the Duc de Gramont, who was also there, to introduce her to me and spoke to me enthusiastically about my mother, whom she would very much have liked to have known. A few moments later the King received me in his study. He rose as I entered, seemed rather embarrassed, asked me to sit down beside him, and said nothing. I, with the self-confidence of a person who cannot forget who she is and what she is entitled to in spite of what anyone may do to make her forget it, opened the conversation and informed him how anxious I was to see him in order to express my thanks. The King at once recovered and was throughout agreeable and even courtly. He had been described to me as a man who was witty but hypocritical. I found him, on the contrary, frank and kindly. He expressed his regret at not having had the privilege of knowing my mother. To this I replied that he owed it to her not to forget her memory since, besides all the good she had done in France generally, she had frequently been useful to persons attached to his family.

* See Note p 268.

"I am aware of that," he replied, "at Martinique she was an excellent Royalist." An odd remark to make about the wife of the Emperor Napoleon I. After I had told him how happy I was to live quietly in France and to bring up my children there, he suddenly asked this question: "Is it true that one day when Bonaparte was particularly well dressed and asked you what you thought of his uniform you answered, 'The sword of the Constable of France' would be much more becoming to you'?"

Aghast at this query, I thought it wiser not to reply. As a matter of fact I had never made this remark. Formerly, owing to my preference for a quiet calm life, I may, at some time or other, have shown some alarm at a glory which displeased my taste for simplicity, but to admit an impression which might be interpreted as a criticism of the Empire would have seemed to me an act of disloyalty. I sought some way of not offending an old man, and answered, "Many phrases were attributed to me in the past without people taking the pains to find out whether they were true or not, but one thing is certainly true to-day, namely, that, completely absorbed by the education of my children, the only thing I desire is a retired life."

He felt, I fancy, that he had made an unfortunate remark and sought to remedy it by saying a great many agreeable things. He rose, and so did I, and he asked permission to embrace me, kissed my hand and added that he would always be glad to see me, whether in public or private. I answered that I considered myself as an old woman who had withdrawn from society. The expression of "old woman" made him laugh. I added that I had no intention of going out in society any more but if he wished it I should be glad to see him occasionally in private.

During the conversation he seemed to wish me to meet other members of his family, but I did not feel that it was obligatory for me to do so. Moreover, nothing that I heard about them, their personalities, their past and their efforts to efface it made me anxious to see them. I thought this one visit was enough.

After my reception by the King, the Duc de Gramont

* Title of the commander-in-chief of the Royal forces.

and other regular attendants at Court, some of whom I knew and some of whom were new to me, came up and asked if I had been satisfied with my reception. I replied I had every reason to be pleased and they all conducted me back to my carriage.

When I returned home all my friends enquired if I was pleased with my interview, and exclaimed : " If the King is kind to you we shall all rally to him." The King told everyone about our conversation and praised me highly.

The friendship of the Emperor of Russia had already made me many enemies. The praises of the King completed the hostility which all the prominent people in society felt towards me. It was said that the Duchesse d'Angoulême herself did not conceal her vexation. The favourite courtiers even went so far as to banter the King about his enthusiasm for me and the means by which I might become free to marry him.

At any rate, for several days I formed the chief topic of conversation at Court. Certain remarks were repeated to me. The King had said, " I never met a woman, and I have known a great many, who was more distinguished in her bearing, more agreeable in her manners." To this the Duc de Duras replied, " It is true, Sire, she is charming. It is a pity she is so ill-advised by her friends. Her only intimates are young men who criticize your government and are Your Majesty's personal enemies." Everyone was silent and the King let the subject drop. This was the beginning of that new life which I intended to be so peaceful and which jealousy, a little social success, and many domestic troubles, were about to make so stormy.

My household consisted only of Madame de Boubers, who had returned to me after the departure of the King of Rome, Mademoiselle Courtin, a young woman I had had educated at Écouen, and Mademoiselle Cochelet, my former reader. A curious chain of circumstances had caused the latter to become the intermediary between our household and the Emperor of Russia. She wrote to him and received very cordial replies. That was enough to make people think that she was an important character in European diplomatic circles, and there was gossip also about

her and her imaginary intrigues I had also kept with me, as gentlemen-in-waiting, Monsieur de Marmol, Monsieur de Vaux and the Abbé Bertrand for my children

I still lived at Saint-Leu. The village priest, a kindly soul who was fond of me, when he came back from a short visit to Paris informed me that already I was being accused of holding secret meetings out there in the country. I could not imagine the basis for such rumours as I only received a few friends. We spent our days taking walks, drawing, studying music, singing, or reading, and those who came to see me immediately adopted our habits. The visitors who had never attempted to sketch before frequently furnished amusement for those who were more advanced in this art but, one and all, they were obliged to work, and the drawing-room at times looked like a classroom, while its occupants enjoyed the simple gaiety of school children.

My husband's letter in reply to mine suddenly disturbed these innocent occupations. He would not listen to my arguments and threatened that unless my son joined him immediately he would take legal action. I found myself therefore obliged to leave my country place where I had expected to stay all winter and establish myself in Paris in order to secure legal advice.* I was in despair, the more so as I was utterly ignorant regarding matters of this sort and did not know whom to ask about them. I was immovable on only one point, the impossibility of letting my son leave me, the wish to keep him with me at no matter what cost.

My friends urged upon me the scandal of a lawsuit in my position and that people would exploit the slightest accusation brought against me. Then, too, it was the policy of the government to do everything it could to discredit the name I bore. Even my brother wrote to me from Vienna that he and the Emperor of Russia both considered that I ought not to involve myself in such a lawsuit. I understood all their arguments. I even knew, beyond a doubt, that the government desired to make the case sufficiently sensational to distract the public's attention from the debates in the Chamber of Deputies.

* See Note p. 263.

But when I weighed all this against the loss of my son, and all that I feared the departure would mean to him, I considered I was making a necessary sacrifice in order to insure his happiness by going into court. I preferred to expose myself to public censure rather than lose my child.

I was obliged to follow the advice of my lawyers blindly, for I scarcely knew what a lawsuit was. My chief adviser was Monsieur Bonnet and he chose as advisers Belart, Laborie and Lacrois-Frainville. I handed all my papers over to them, all my husband's letters to me, his act of abdication, the papers which he and the Emperor had given me regarding my children, and which to this time had always made me their sole guardian. My heart broke every time I saw these strangers rummage about among my domestic secrets and prepare to inform the public about all those things which my husband and I ought to have kept to ourselves. I wrote to him again, saying that in the spring I would bring my children to see him, but that I asked him to spare them to me for at least this winter. My husband, however, insisted that the case should come on immediately ; and his agent, so proud of representing (even in a minor capacity) a King—although the latter happened to have been dethroned—did everything he could to embitter matters instead of trying to conciliate them. He would consent to no delay, no mutual agreement of any kind, and declared that he was acting in behalf of a Father.

The sufferings this trial caused me are something unimaginable. The majority of lawyers, when they handle a case, think primarily of themselves. They wish to attract attention and they do not sufficiently adopt their client's point of view. I had expressly ordered Monsieur Bonnet to refer to my husband only in polite terms, to remember the name I bore and that I wished to have respected, and especially not to mention at any time the Emperor Napoleon except in such a manner as I might have done myself. But he paid little attention to what I said. Already he was more busy turning over in his mind some effective phrase, some witty remark he could make during the trial, rather than considering my peculiar situation or studying how he could avoid hurting certain proprieties to which

I was so attached. Moreover, he seemed more anxious about his own reputation than about mine.

The first newspaper article* which appeared was intended to hurt my husband. I was extremely sorry, and someone acting at my request undertook to have some favourable comments on the person who had been criticized printed the next day. It was amusing to think that I should be attacking my husband with one hand and defending him against attack with the other. Further articles appeared that made fun of both of us, and I was always treated the more severely of the two. I was equally hurt by the accusation made by my husband's lawyer, that I had abandoned in his hour of misfortune the man from whose rise in rank I had benefited. Such a remark addressed to me, who had wasted my youth and my strength in trying to satisfy a being whose morbid temperament was dragging me to my grave! My conscience was too much above such accusations to be affected by them. What grieved me was to turn the eyes of the world upon them! Ah, how well I had chosen my motto "*Moins comme, moins trouble.*" But the more I appreciated the joys of a retired life the more Fate seemed to upset my plans, by making me the centre of an agitated and troubled scene. I was told that it was absolutely necessary for me to make certain advances to the judges, and have someone who belonged to me call on them afterwards. I could not imagine that this was true. It disgusted me. It seemed to me that such wire-pulling would be unworthy of Justice and of my cause*.

Monsieur Courtin, King's proctor, who was supposed to sum up the case, called on me one morning in reply to an invitation from one of my friends. What could I tell him about the case? I wished to keep my son. He knew this as well as I did. Consequently, instead of speaking of the subject he told me, under the most formal promise of secrecy, of an extraordinary investigation he had been asked to make a few days before. It seems that a certain Monsieur de Maubreuil, after having stolen all the diamonds belonging to the Queen of Westphalia, had been arrested by request of the Emperor of Russia. The Russian minister had received orders to follow up the matter

* See Note p. 269

and try to find the diamonds. The French government had been obliged to take up the investigation. At the time of his first examination Maubreuil had declared to Monsieur Courtin that, during the brief period when the Provisional Government was in office, the Prince of Bénévento (Talleyrand) had sent for him and ordered him to assassinate all the members of Napoleon's family, that Monsieur Laborie had given him further detailed instructions and that, having set out, armed with full authority, a sudden uncertainty had made him hesitate: he was not sure whether this order included the Empress Marie-Louise and her son, or whether they were to be considered as belonging to the Austrian Imperial family. He had feared to make a mistake and returned to consult Monsieur Laborie, who had replied impatiently, "Oh, those two, do as you please about them. The great thing is to act quickly." The King's proctor had sent a report of this examination to the government at once, in spite of the request of the Russian minister not to do so. The affair had been suppressed and Monsieur de Maubreuil* been placed in prison indefinitely. I promised Monsieur Courtin not to repeat this and kept my word.

Imagine my feelings when I found myself face to face with the man whom his brother lawyers had chosen to defend my case, this same Laborie who a short time ago had given orders for the murder of my entire family! I looked at him fixedly. He inspired me with pity rather than horror. I felt that in spite of the deceitfulness of his manner he must be extremely embarrassed in my presence. What thoughts must have been his when he recalled that horrible plan.

This conversation with Monsieur Courtin left me no doubt as to the enmity with which I was surrounded, and from which the quietest, most retired life had not been able to free me. Every day I discovered new enemies. They detested me so much that they could not forgive me for having an assured position, a household and a few friends. Those who were under obligations to me were those who the most resented my presence. They could not pardon the fact that they owed much to me and my family, they

* See Note p 269

considered this a crime on my part and consequently it was easy for them to say, "It is at her house that the conspirators meet. The King and his family are insulted there. No one would think of being seen at such a place."

If the least sign of unrest appeared in some corner of France I was at once supposed to be the instigator of it. It was by such remarks that those who were indebted to me for favours sought to pay their debts, although they might have realized that if plotting was going on, if remarks were being made about the King, my personal position was such a delicate one and my house was certainly so closely watched that it was the last spot where any political demonstration was likely to be made.

Only on one occasion, when Messieurs de Broglie, de Labédoyère, de Flahaut, de Ségur, Lavallette and Perregaux all happened to call at the same time a discussion came up as to whether in order to sustain the principles of that liberty which had been promised to the nation, General Exelmans ought not to refuse to obey the order of the government which arbitrarily forbade his remaining in Paris, though he was not on active service, and they all agreed that the ministerial order ought to be resisted. I rose and withdrew, telling these gentlemen that the subject was much too serious for me and that I would leave them to discuss it among themselves. The party at once broke up and from that time no political matters were ever discussed in my presence.

When I had come to live in Paris on account of my miserable lawsuit, I had expected to receive only a few intimate friends, but this talk of conspiracies made me decide to hold a reception once a week to which I would invite some of those English people who had asked in vain to be presented to me. In admitting them to my circle, I hoped they would repeat impartially what they saw there and consequently help to make known the true facts which so many people sought to misinterpret. I was not wrong. A Mr Bruce, a young Englishman whom I had met several times,* and who had pleased me on account of his simplicity and idealism, and his account of the journey he had made in Africa, happened

* See Note p. 269.

one day to be at the house of the Duchesse de Mouchy, while she, with Madame Moreau and a Lady Hamilton,* were expressing their astonishment that the King allowed me to remain in France, as my receptions were in reality meetings of conspirators against the government. Mr. Bruce protested violently against such statements.

"You ladies do not attend these receptions, and I have done so. I declare that it is the only house in Paris where one finds the atmosphere of a true French drawing-room, which was so justly famous throughout Europe and which no longer exists in your own country. There at least people converse without discussing politics. The topics are literature and the arts, and one never hears scandal about anybody." In this case injustice had brought me a partisan.

I had given Monsieur Boutiaguine, the Russian chargé d'affaires, permission to come to the house even when I was only at home to my intimate friends. I did not fear for anyone to see what went on there.

I avoided all arguments about political matters and was delighted to think that they were no longer any concern of mine. Yet at the same time, how could I remain deaf to the complaints of Frenchmen who saw themselves humiliated in their own country, while foreigners ruled in their place? All I could do was to attempt to calm their anger, but new incidents provoked fresh outbursts. The brother of the notorious Georges Cadoudal (involved in the attempted assassination of Napoleon¹) had just received a title. Was it possible that the Bourbons so openly admitted they were the accomplices of an assassin? Madame Moreau was authorized to assume the title of *Maréchale* and her husband had died fighting against us. I was asked to recommend someone to Monsieur Pozzo di Borgo in order to obtain a post. The latter made the following naive remark to me, "One can get nothing out of Monsieur de Blacas. Incredible as it sounds, he promised me a post long ago for a man to whom we certainly owe a favour, since he helped us capture Paris, and he has not yet given anything." I could not say a word. I no longer wanted anything. I blushed

* See Note p. 269.

¹ See Vol I, page 62 et seq

at having recommended an honourable man to one who dared boast to me that he was helping a traitor

Thus was my country brought into subjection. Foreigners made her laws. Could one blame the indignation of those who were unable to forget that it had been France, only yesterday, who dictated to the rest of Europe? But I felt we must stifle our complaints. The hot-headedness of our young Frenchmen alarmed me. Every day they became more incensed, while I, prudent and uneasy, tried to make use of this very memory of our former grandeur to win them back to a more reasonable state of mind. I represented to them that our armies had carried the name of France to the highest pinnacle of glory, that the one thing needful now was rest, and that peace had charms that it was time to know, and I exhorted them to enjoy them. I brought them to discuss subjects less perilous and more agreeable for everyone. Always our amusements were the same. Billiards, music, reading aloud, occupied our evenings.

I never spent one single evening away from home, and my drawing-room became so well known and admired on account of the distinguished people who were to be found there, that this mild social success aroused animosities even more to be dreaded than political enmities, those of young women whose attacks did not limit themselves to the field of politics.

The persistent animosity displayed by this clique towards me was an example of that felt by so many other circles for anything that belonged to the imperial régime. The two parties were constantly observing one another, estimating one another's strength and growing more and more actively hostile.

One day when I was even more worried than usual as to the result of my lawsuit, Monsieur Fleury de Chaboulon, a young auditor whom I hardly knew, called on me with a recommendation from one of my friends. He said to me that France had fallen so low that it was impossible for a man of honour to remain there any longer and that he had decided to go to Elba and take service with the Emperor. I urged him to reconsider his decision, which

seemed to me to be a sudden impulse, for, as he was not known to the Emperor, he ran the risk of not proving acceptable. But his mind was made up irrevocably, and provided that his name would be included among those faithful to the Emperor, he desired no other recompense. He undertook to deliver verbal messages for me, but declined to carry letters ; so I asked him to assure the Emperor of my devotion, which his misfortunes had only increased and, as I was constantly seeking means of keeping my children with me and as my lawyer asserted that an authorization in the Emperor's handwriting approving my separation from my husband would settle the question, I asked Monsieur Fleury de Chabaulon to procure this for me. For anything else which I might have wished to communicate to the Emperor I should never have dared confide it to a man whom I scarcely knew and who might have been sent to me to lead me into a trap. This was the only Frenchman who ever set out for Elba and I am certain that he had no secret mission of any kind.

Meanwhile nothing was done towards executing the treaty of April 11th, which the King had signed. I knew that the Emperor when he left Fontainebleau had scarcely enough money with him to pay the expenses of his guard for a few months. During the few moments I had spent at Rambouillet I had seen the Empress send him a sum of, I believe, seven hundred thousand francs,* the rest of his personal funds having been seized and taken back to Paris. He had never thought of separating his fortune from that of France, and he had no private means of any kind. For his safety, for his personal protection even, it was absolutely necessary to maintain his bodyguard at Elba. The thought that he might shortly find himself obliged to dismiss it, because the treaty he had signed was not carried out, was most painful to me. I felt myself in a way called upon by my position in France to act on his behalf, but to whom should I apply ? Who had power to exact that to which he was justly entitled ? Monsieur Pozzo di Borgo no longer came to my house. Lord Wellington was the English ambassador in Paris. He gave brilliant entertainments, did the honours of the

* See Note p. 269
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capital and dominated it. He had asked Madame Récamier to present him to me at my home. I took advantage of this opportunity in the hope that as a generous enemy he might make it a point of honour to exact the execution of treaties signed by his government. I received him, and, another day, I asked him to dine. Beneath an exterior which at first seemed to lack distinction it was easy to see that he possessed an English pride sustained by the conviction of his personal merits.* He had that keenness of glance which indicates the habit of observation rather than creative genius, and this made him look more like a diplomat than a military leader. In a tone of cold admiration he spoke to me of the Emperor's great military gifts and, with a touch of national pride, of the obstinacy with which England had always refused to recognize him. He blamed the French government for not having fulfilled the conditions of the treaty with the Emperor and assured me he would again call attention to the sacred character of the obligations.*

One evening while I was as usual at the piano, word was brought me that the Town Clerk had called to tell me that on the following morning the government would take possession of all my property and affix its seal on every thing I owned. I could not understand the motive for such an astounding act. He begged me to believe in his devotion to my interests, as I had at one time helped a member of his family and he wished to prove his gratitude by telling me of the order received at the mayoralty in time for me to remove my most precious belongings to a place of safety. He added that I could verify his statements by sending someone to the house of Cardinal Fesch, where for the last two hours they had been placing the official seal on all the Cardinal's property. This I did, and learned that the information was correct. I therefore hastened to entrust my diamonds to the friends who happened to be with me.*

This, then, was that perfect tranquillity which I had dreamed of after all the storms I had traversed! This the promised liberty! The next morning I received the order that seals were to be affixed to all the property, furni-

ture and real estate belonging to the members of the Emperor's family, in spite of the treaty of April 11th which had stipulated that they could keep their property in France. The order was carried out as regards all members of the Imperial family but, on my declaration that I had nothing belonging to my husband, it was conceded that I should not be included on account of the clause covering my special case.

Nevertheless, all this violence troubled my peace of mind. I began to regret the combination of circumstances which had kept me in my own country and I resolved that so soon as my lawsuit was over I would withdraw to Prégny, the little estate I owned on the shores of Lake Geneva.

The judgment which must decide the fate of my son was about to be pronounced at last towards the end of February. I awaited the issue in painful anxiety mingled with hope founded on the favourable attitude of the judges. But I heard from Monsieur Devaux that sentence had been postponed for a week. This delay made me think, as afterwards proved the case, that the government, anxious for my children to leave France, brought influence to bear on the decision of my lawsuit.*

* See Note p 270

CHAPTER XV

THE RETURN OF THE EMPEROR (MARCH 5TH—MARCH 21ST, 1815)

The Fifth of March, 1815—The wife of Marshal Ney—The Emperor's advance—The Queen seeks refuge with Madame Lefebvre—While Paris waits—The Emperor enters his capital—Hortense is received by Napoleon—A great Review—At the Tuilleries.

ON Monday, March 5th, as I was coming back from my drive absorbed in melancholy thoughts, Lord Kinnaird* appeared on horseback beside my carriage and said, "Have you heard the great news, madame? The Emperor Napoleon has landed at Cannes." I was thunderstruck. He added that he had just left the house of the Duc d'Orléans who was leaving for Lyons, whither the Comte d'Artois had preceded him, and that the Court was very much excited. My first thought was for my children. "Do you think," I asked, "that they are in any danger?"—"No, I do not think so," he answered, "although perhaps they may be held as hostages." I trembled at the thought. He, being English, seemed so afraid of a popular rising against foreigners and in favour of the Emperor that I offered him and all his family my house as a refuge in case such a rising took place, for I knew that I had nothing to fear from the masses. On returning home I immediately sent my children to the wife of one of my friends who was in the country, begging her not to send me news of them unless they should be ill. Once this cause for anxiety removed I felt better able to face events whatever they might be.

It was a Monday, the day on which, as a rule, I had the most visitors. I had invited several people, among

* See Note p. 270

them Comtesse de Laval, a Russian by birth and the friend of Comte de Blacas. For a moment I hesitated whether I had better close my door. I could do nothing in regard to what was taking place, I had nothing to hide, so I preferred to show myself in order to avoid any false interpretations of my conduct. Curiosity, desire for news, general nervousness, caused more people to come to see me than usual. I behaved as though I knew nothing of what had happened and, following my example, no one else said a word about it either. Nevertheless the next morning all Paris heard how my drawing-room had echoed with congratulations, how verses had been sung in honour of the Emperor and how everyone had expressed their hopes for his success. People even went so far as to give the name of the author of the verses, a Monsieur Etienne, whom I had never seen, and who was said to have been present. To such lengths will political partisanship go ! The persons who had been with me did nothing to refute gossip which they knew to be false, so afraid were they of seeming to protest against a calumny that it was the right thing to encourage. Young Madame Turpin, wife of one of my mother's chamberlains (a woman whose benefactress I had always been) said to my maid of honour, Madame d'Arjuzon, that people assured her that seditious songs had been sung. "But," said Madame d'Arjuzon, "you were at that reception, were you not?"—"Yes," replied Madame Turpin.—"Well, did you hear anything?"—"No, but probably it happened after I had left."

Never had my emotions been so varied. Would the Emperor succeed ? Would he fail ? What fate awaited him ? And also what was going to happen to France ? Was she not threatened with a civil war in addition, perhaps, to a foreign conflict ? My friends who had so loudly protested against the Bourbons, were they in no danger of retaliatory measures ? Then, too, there was the Bourbon family, who, I feared, might fall victims of political revenge. Everything troubled me.

Monsieur de Flahaut, Monsieur Lavallette and the Duc de Vicenza came to see me. They were all as surprised and uneasy at this unexpected event as I was.

Our long habit of seeing the Emperor fortunate and skilful, led us to believe he must succeed. But what would be the sequel of such an adventure? If only he did not expect to find the French Empire just as he had left it, if only he would accept the ideas of the day and give up the dream of conquest! At other moments we doubted the possibility of his return, and the thought occurred to me that perhaps Monsieur de Labédoyère, obeying his enthusiasm, had used the Emperor's name to provoke a rising. In any event I advised these gentlemen not to come and see me again, but to stay at home quietly so that their enemies might have no pretext to injure them.

My lawsuit was decided and lost, but I was less distressed by this on account of the great events which gave me hope that I might still keep my son with me.

The wife of Marshal Ney came to see me and told me that her husband had received orders to report to his headquarters at Besançon, to assemble his troops there and to march against the Emperor. She was in despair and bewailed the Emperor's landing almost as though she had a presentiment of all the tragedy it was to bring upon her, although in view of her husband's opinion and his resolve to fight, she could not guess that the Emperor would not be the victim of this "*mad adventure*," as she called it. Rather piqued by this expression, I remarked that perhaps she and her husband were mistaken about the opinion of the army and the country, and that the number of malcontents was not inferior to that of those who had remained faithful to the Imperial cause. She seemed to think my wish was father to my thought, and reminded me of all our mental anguish in war time and the great store that I had always set on peace. I interrupted her by saying, 'It is not a question, in this case, of what we hope or wish, but, although I am as surprised as you are by this sudden news, the success of the Emperor seems to me to be a certainty.' No doubt she repeated this conversation to her husband who, finding out later that I had guessed rightly, thought, perhaps, that I had had something to do with the Emperor's return and that everything had been

arranged without his being informed of it. This is what he affirmed to those whom he advised to act as he was acting.

Other persons came to me and said with apparent sincerity and in a sympathetic manner, "What a sad end for such a great man! He must have gone mad! The idea of landing with six hundred men! Perhaps at this very moment he is being tracked down like a wild beast." I smiled at their opinions without sharing their commiseration.

Days passed. The newspapers announced that Colonel de Labédoyère had gone over to the Emperor with his regiment. People knew that he frequented my salon, and all eyes were turned on me.

The Duc d'Otrante (Fouché) whom I never saw, whom I could not like on account of his behaviour at the time of my mother's divorce, and whose house was close to mine,* asked me to receive him. In time of crisis it is well to listen to everyone's advice and especially that of a man familiar with all the intricacies of politics. So I received him immediately. After having explained that he feared arrest and asked permission to escape by way of my garden, which adjoined his and had an exit on the Rue Taitbout, the Duke advised me to take precautions for my own safety. He assured me that I was as much in peril as he was and that I was supposed to be in touch with the island of Elba. This led us to talk about the state of France. He assured me that the Bourbon cause was hopeless, as their innumerable mistakes must lead to their downfall and make the people receive the Emperor with open arms. Even should there be a moment of civil war, the Emperor would win easily, too easily perhaps to allow conditions to be imposed on him, yet he could not hope to be again the Dictator he had been in the past. The Duke said it was extremely important to know the intentions of the Allied Sovereigns and especially those of the one who had shown the most sympathy for France. My brother, who, at Vienna, was seeing the Emperor of Russia daily, seemed to the Duke the person most likely to inspire confidence in all political parties and whose advice would be the most useful to his country at this particular moment if he could be sent

* See Note p 270

to Paris 'quickly. The Duke asked me to convey this opinion to the Russian chargé d'affaires without delay in order that the latter could communicate it to his sovereign.

He thought it best to go to some safe refuge while waiting on events, and it was in order to facilitate such an escape that he asked for a key of my garden. I had it given to him and promised to do what he asked in regard to the Russian chargé d'affaires. I did not even take the trouble to think over this conversation, but simply repeated it to Monsieur Boutiaugne, who asked me to make a note of the interview because he might not remember the exact expressions used by the Duc d'Otrante. I was simply a go-between in the matter, but I wrote the note for Monsieur Boutiaugne without reflecting on it, and he, instead of copying it, sent it to his sovereign.

Meanwhile the Emperor had passed through Grenoble and was approaching Lyons. From every side rumours reached me that the Royalist party was about to take violent measures. A prominent police official to whom my brother had formerly done a favour, sent word to me that, at a meeting of the King's private council, a list of persons who were to be arrested had been drawn up, and that my name figured on the list. Plans were being made, so I was told, to provoke a popular insurrection against the Emperor, and the *Chouans* were mustered in Paris and received money with orders to attempt a rising. They were to seize several private houses, including that of the Duc de Rovigo. My house was next door. Consequently I was advised to leave home.

Monsieur Alexandre de Girardin, a lieutenant-general attached to the Duc de Berry, who managed to conciliate his official duties with his personal friendship for me, called to inform me, in my own interests and also in those of the family he then served, of the serious accusations which were being made against me. It was openly said at Court that I had pawned my diamonds and distributed the money to win over the troops. Yet I was far from conspiring to provoke a change of dynasty. I was incapable of doing anything of the kind, my natural sense of right

would alone have sufficed to prevent me from any movement against the government which had allowed me to stay in France. And, setting aside this moral obligation, I, with my ideas of responsibility, should have thought it wrong to use my influence to bring about events whose consequences could not be foreseen. Therefore I could not believe I was in danger. Nevertheless, when Monsieur Boutiaguine convinced me that as I was looked on as the agent of the Emperor Napoleon in Paris I was no longer safe there, and when everyone about me urged me to escape I finally made up my mind to leave home.

I went out at ten o'clock in the morning [March 11th, 1815] wearing a hat and coat belonging to Mademoiselle Cochelet, and, the better to make belief that it was she, I took her brother's arm rather than that of Monsieur Devaux, an elderly man, my former equerry. As we came out of the house and as we turned the corner of the Rue Cerutti, I put my head down to escape the glances of the police spies who were already stationed there. They looked at me curiously but did not follow us. I think that I ought to have been extremely frightened. Well ! the embarrassment of finding myself for the first time in my life walking through the streets alone with a young man and without any lady was more in my mind than any thought of danger. Fortunately, it was raining and our umbrella still further helped to hide my face. My guide was quite as much alarmed as I was. My lace-trimmed dress that I had not taken the time to change and which the borrowed coat did not wholly conceal, filled him with fears for me, and at every step of the way (which seemed to me a long one) he trembled lest I should be recognized. At last we reached a house in the Rue Duphot at the corner of the Boulevard, and without having been seen by anyone, I slipped up to the third floor and sought refuge with Madame Lefebvre, my brother's old nurse, who had accompanied my mother when she came from Martinique. She poured forth her joy at receiving me and at being able to be of use to me and I found myself all at once in a familiar setting, surrounded by family portraits and a quantity of little objects which had belonged to my brother and me when we were children.

and which Madame Lefebvre had preciously treasured ever since. Her husband gave up his room to me.

There I was, utterly alone and free to turn recent events over in my mind. And I found out that what hurt me most was the rôle attributed to me by malicious gossip. It was said that I went about among the troops in the barracks distributing money. I recognized myself so little in this picture that I resolved to write to Monsieur d'André, Minister of the Police, to refute these absurd reports, of whose falsity he must have been better aware than anyone. I added that no matter what future might seem to open out before me or my children, my disposition was such that I could never play any part in public life but only passively await the course of events. This letter was shown to the King. But as fear makes us suspicious and as the Emperor's progress doubled apprehension, the hostility towards me became intense.

Meanwhile, every morning the newspapers informed me that the decisive moment was approaching. All eyes were fixed on the military leaders. Four thousand men had entered Soissons crying "Long live the Emperor!" and were marching on Paris.

I have since learned that for several months past a thousand plots had been brewing. Even in the army there was distrust of the marshals and of the new military chiefs. Generals Lallemand and Lefebvre-Desnouëttes were preparing a revolt quite independent of the Emperor's return*, if he had not disembarked at Cannes when he did. The Bourbons would have been overthrown even without his arrival. The landing of the Emperor merely turned popular feeling in a new direction. For instance, when General Lefebvre-Desnouëttes heard of it he set out to join him at the head of his troops, saying that he was leading the Old Guard back to its former commander. The two Generals Lallemand had also prepared to march on Paris, but were stopped a short distance from the capital by Colonel de Talhouët, who refused to let his regiment take arms against the King, and by this opposition upset the plans of the leaders of the attempt. The Lallemand brothers were captured and General Lefebvre-Desnouëttes

managed to hide. This slight success encouraged the Royalist party. A camp was formed at Mélun, commanded by Monsieur le Duc de Berri. A Royalist volunteer corps was organized and men of all ages enlisted in it.

From my window I could see the boulevard, and it offered me a curious sight. Sometimes groups of Royalist volunteers marched past, composed of young enthusiasts and old servants, the former were arrogant and proud, the latter breathless and weary under the weight of their equipment; all were inexperienced, all equally ardent, and all cried "Long live the King!" They would be followed by a cavalry regiment of the old army, whose horsemen sat motionless amid the excitement, unmoved by the demonstrations in which the crowd sought to make them take part. Disdainful of these empty cheers, calm and preoccupied, they seemed to dream of the man against whom they were to fight rather than of the King whose cause they were to defend. And the crowd, as though at a play, waited for the outcome in silence, but it knew well enough which of the adversaries it would soon have to applaud.

It happened by chance that the apartment next to mine was occupied by one of the chiefs of the Royalists of La Vendée. All day long ill-looking men came to see him and seemed to receive money and take orders. An old woman who from her room could hear what they said, told Madame Lefebvre that they had a very active police service and that she had heard the distribution of money and weapons and, of course, all this increased Madame Lefebvre's fears for my safety. She implored me not to show myself at the window because a painter of extremely royalist views lodged opposite, and below him lived the family of a Guardsman. Certain anonymous letters sent me to my home informed me that two hundred *Chouans* were going to meet the Emperor under a regimental flag and with the design of assassinating him. I trembled, but how could I warn him?

Monsieur Devaux came one evening to give me news of my friends. All who were known to be Bonapartists

had already gone into hiding. The Duc de Vicenza had sought refuge with an old cook, Monsieur de Flahaut at the house of Monsieur Alexandre de Girardin, and Monsieur Lavallette in my house.* Surprised at the choice of the last-named retreat, I was told that he considered it a particularly safe place since I had left, and that he was taking all sorts of precautions such as arranging a secret cupboard in the attic and keeping as a disguise the wig of my major-domo in reserve, which from time to time led to rather amusing scenes, thus lightening the atmosphere of my home in my absence.

The Duc d'Otrante, who, as he had foreseen, was to have been arrested, found a pretext for leaving the police officers for a moment, and by means of a ladder he climbed the wall of my garden. Having in his flurry forgotten the key of the little gate, he broke the lock with a stone and left the door open. The police were so surprised not to find any trace of him in his own house that there were said to be secret passages between it and mine. The Duke has since told me that when he had come to ask me to facilitate his escape and had spoken to me about my brother, he had just had a conference by night with the Comte d'Artois, who had begged him, on behalf of the King, to assume the post of Chief of Police with unlimited powers, but he had refused, saying that it was too late and that it was no longer possible to save their dynasty. This refusal was doubtless the reason for his arrest, as he suspected.

I wrote to Madame du Cayla for news of Monsieur Sosthènes de la Rochefoucauld, whose intense devotion to the Royalist cause might lead him to expose himself unduly. He was at Bordeaux with the Duchesse d'Angoulême, who displayed a strength of character worthy of her rank.

One evening I was told that the father-in-law of Vincent Rousseau, my *valet de chambre*, bearing official despatches, had just arrived from Lyons, where he had witnessed the Emperor's entry into the city. An immense throng, wild with the joy of seeing him again, had cheered him with enthusiasm. King Louis XVIII sent for the man and enquired if he had seen Bonaparte. The messenger

* See Note p. 270

replied quite frankly that he had seen him at Lyons surrounded by a crowd of people who kissed his uniform and whose enthusiasm was boundless. He added, "'Pon my word, Sire, your nobility showed a poor spirit! I saw your brother come back alone with two constables. Everyone else had abandoned him.'" The courtiers tried to silence him while the King, quite overcome, hid his face in his hands. The messenger having been dismissed, the Chief of Police sent for him and forbade him to tell what he had seen at Lyons or even to leave his home. But the messenger told everything to his daughter, who came to tell it to her husband. Monsieur Lavallette forbade Vincent Rousseau to go to see his father-in-law for fear lest he and my other servants might be suspected of being in touch with a government despatch bearer.

My few days' sequestration already seemed very long to me, and in spite of my old servant's warnings, I could not resist standing by the window to breathe a little fresh air. On the morning of March 20th I beheld the youthful members of the King's bodyguard who had looked so fiery a short time before, looking very downcast as they took leave of the members of their grief-stricken families. The painter who lived across the street appeared at his window with a very preoccupied air. The huge white ribbon that I had admired in his buttonhole had disappeared. Armed with a feather broom he was busy removing the dust from a full-length portrait of one of the Emperor's ministers, which I seemed to recognize as that of Monsieur de Montalivet. The painter's wife, a thin, nervous creature, appeared to be talking with him eagerly and to be in a great state of excitement. This sudden change made me feel that others must have occurred elsewhere in the capital. I was impatient to hear the news when Monsieur Devaux arrived, and told me that the King had left hastily during the night* upon hearing that Marshal Ney and his army corps had gone over to the Emperor. Monsieur Devaux had heard of this departure from one of the floor polishers of his house, uncle to a ballet girl named Virginie, the mistress of the Duc de Berri. During the night of March 19th the prince had come to say good-bye because the

* See Note p. 270

young dancer had just had a child. He told her in the presence of her family, in whose care he left her, "We must separate for ever All is over for us We have lost everything"

I wished to return home immediately, but Monsieur Devaux remarked that the hordes of vagabonds that had been called to Paris might commit excesses and that the Bourbons had abandoned the capital without leaving anyone in authority to keep order

Does it seem credible that in spite of the emotions of every kind which had preyed upon me during the past few days I was still sentimental enough to be moved for the fate of this family who, after so brief a return home, were a second time sent into exile? They must be suffering all those painful sensations which I myself had felt so lately, and this idea made me sympathize with them. The Orléans family were those for whom I felt the most sorry Without knowing any of them personally, their affable behaviour, their estimable domestic life had charmed all who had come in contact with them, and this sentiment had communicated itself to me I remembered that the Duke had received my brother kindly and in this critical moment when it was possible that the masses might commit some act of violence against them I, who had nothing to fear from the mob, would have been glad to be useful to them if the opportunity presented itself A few days before I had sent word to one of my maids, who had been also employed by Mademoiselle d'Orléans, that my services were at their disposal should they feel that either they themselves or any of their children were in danger My maid, Madame Charles, went to deliver my message and came back saying she had not ventured to do so "Alas," she added, "how could I mention your name when Mademoiselle d'Orléans on seeing me exclaimed "We are obliged to leave again and it is that Duchesse de Saint-Leu who has ruined us.""

In a moment so critical for the king, I only remembered the friendly manner in which he had received me, and I thought that, at a time when everyone was deserting him, it might be agreeable to him to hear that I recalled his

kindness towards me. I wrote to him and repeated the expression of my thanks, giving the letter to Monsieur de Lascours, an officer of his bodyguard who was to join him abroad.

Monsieur Devaux came back at three o'clock and said that in all probability the Emperor would enter Paris that same day. He had with him a letter which the Duc d'Otrante wished me to deliver to the Emperor, for it was important, so he said, that the Emperor should receive it before entering the town. (I even believe it was to warn the Emperor to be on his guard against the *Chouans* in disguise who were planning to assassinate him.) My footman, Rousseau, left at once with it.

Nothing surprised me so much on my way home as to see how all the shopkeepers along the boulevards were busy changing or turning round their signs. Eagles and bees were taking the place of lilies and, fortunately, this change was the only outward sign of the great event that had taken place.

But what an amazing, miraculous and unheard of thing was that march from Cannes to Paris ! When he came up to the outpost of the first regiment which had been dispatched from Grenoble to attack him, the Emperor dismounted, stepped forward alone and said to the nearest soldier, "Do you recognize me ? Would you dare fire on your general ?" Cries of "Long live the Emperor !" were the reply and this body of troops joined his force. Very soon afterwards Colonel de Labédoyère brought over his regiment and opened the gates of Grenoble. Thence to Paris the Emperor travelled in a little carriage almost without any escort. As soon as he beheld a regiment marching against him he would quietly get out, walk forward to meet it, and review it as he had done in the past. This confidence in the troops conquered them immediately. At first they were astonished, then they became enthusiastic and gave way to their emotions, until it seemed to him and to other observers that he had never for a moment ceased to be the Emperor of the French.

My footman met the Emperor near Essones (a village between Paris and Fontainebleau), just as he was changing

horses, and found the escort so small that he could not realize that this was he. Having delivered the letter, he returned to report that so many country folk were hurrying up from all sides to see the Emperor pass and so many Parisians were going out to meet him that he had been obliged to come back at a snail's pace. Everywhere the enthusiasm was intense.

The troops who had concentrated at the camp at Mélny and who had taken their places along the Essones road, shouted "Long live the Emperor!" as soon as they caught sight of him, and certain generals, who till then had been undecided, allowed themselves to be carried away by the impetus of the crowd, in spite of the opinions they had held the day before. They have since remarked "The Princes were not there, what could we do?"

The Emperor's former aides-de-camp, as well as the Duc de Vicenza, had left on the morning of March 20th to meet him, and had joined him at Essones. He embraced them all and bade the Duke get into his carriage, where there already were General Drouot and General Bertrand.

An officer of the National Guard came at seven o'clock in the evening to invite me to go to the Tuileries to await the arrival of the Emperor. The officer was sent by the former cabinet ministers. Crowds surrounded the palace. The sight of my carriage caused much cheering. The sentries belonging to the National Guard were turned out and they saluted as I arrived. They cheered so loudly that I thought the Emperor was entering by another door. But realizing soon that the demonstration was in my honour, I could not help smiling for I remembered how a few days before I had passed this same spot quite unrecognized by the men on duty. What a change in an hour!

Many officers and ladies had assembled in the apartments of the former cabinet ministers. Among the ladies were the Duchesses de Bassano, de Friol, d'Istrie and de Rovigo, Madame Gazzani* and Madame Lallemand. Queen Julie, who happened to be in Paris seeking to regain possession of her estate of Mortefontaine which had been sequestered, arrived a moment after I did. The cheering

* See Note p. 270



*Sepia drawing by
Queen Hortense*

*Belonging to Princess de la Moskowa
née Princess Bonaparte*

NAPOLÉON

that greeted her made us think again that it was the Emperor. Night had fallen. The crowd withdrew. People did not believe he would arrive till the next day. Had he postponed his entry till then his reception would have been a real triumph, but he had never, on any occasion, made a state entry into Paris. He always returned to his palace after dark, and it was not till the next morning that his arrival was announced. Perhaps in this particular instance he wished to return on March 20th, the anniversary of his son's birth. The Royalist interpretation was that he mistrusted the Parisians and that it was of set purpose that he did not arrive till after dark.

At last he drove into the court of the Tuileries at nine o'clock, just twenty days after he had landed on French soil. He had not encountered the least resistance anywhere and had only stopped long enough to change horses and review the different troops. His carriage drew up at the entrance to his ordinary apartment.* We went to meet him and for a few moments he was in actual danger, so great was the eagerness with which people pressed forward, seized by an intoxication which it is difficult to explain. We had only just time to withdraw from the crowd, in order to avoid being suffocated, when we saw him caught up by a thousand arms and carried in triumph to his own apartments. When he arrived there were only two of his former aides-de-camp accompanying his carriage. The others reached Paris later.

When the first movement of joy and enthusiasm had passed, my friends managed to make a path for me through the crowd, and I was able to enter his drawing-room with the other ladies. I stepped forward to embrace him, accompanied by Queen Julie. He received me rather coldly and asked my sister-in-law, "What chance has brought you here?" I noticed he embraced all the other ladies more affectionately than he did us. He greeted all the men in a most cordial manner, especially General Davoust, Prince of Eckmuhl. Madame Lallemand asked for and obtained there and then the release of her husband, who was to have been shot for leading a mutiny. The Emperor asked her several questions about the affair,

* See Note p 270
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of which he only had heard vaguely through the newspapers. Supper was announced and he went in, passing us without a word. Left alone in the salon, Julie and I were discussing the cold reception which we had received when I heard a noise in the Emperor's study. I went to see what it was. To my extreme surprise I discovered there the young accountant, Fleury de Chaboulon, who had left a few months before to go to Elba. He told me that he had arrived at the Tuileries just after the Emperor, to whose cabinet he was attached. It seemed that an illness had prevented his reaching Elba before the end of February. On his arrival the Emperor had asked a great many questions regarding conditions in France and he was quite sure that it was his account that had made the Emperor decide to land so quickly, although the Emperor had never said a word to this effect. On the contrary, having gone to Italy to get certain things for the Emperor he (Chaboulon) was amazed on arriving at Lyons to find his master there. The latter had allowed him to come to Paris in one of his carriages. Thus no one in France could have received word of this return, for the only man who went to the island of Elba arrived in France at the same time as the Emperor.* I asked Monsieur Fleury de Chaboulon if the Emperor had spoken about me and what had been said. The reply was that he had scarcely mentioned me, as the Emperor had appeared so indignant at my having remained in France that he had not dared to deliver my message to him.

I returned to the drawing-room. The Emperor came in a few minutes later and stepped up to me. "Where are your children?" he said—"Sure, existing conditions obliged me to send them away from home. I ask your permission to bring them to you to-morrow"—"I see by the papers," he went on, "that you lost your case. I would have bet on it. Paternal authority is everything." Having said this he went into his study where he received all his ministers one after another. This took so long that we decided to withdraw although we had not yet taken leave. The Duc de Vicenza, as we went out, told me that he was my knight, that people had tried to

injure me at Elba by false reports, and that the Emperor, much displeased, did not wish to receive me at all but that he, the Duke, had done everything he could to turn his heart. He advised me to come the next day with my children. I did so and arrived very early.

An enormous crowd already filled the garden. Officers of all branches of the service and of every rank crowded the courtyards and the stairs. Never had I seen such enthusiasm. The masses are always willing to applaud anything that surprises them, but this event had something superhuman which stirred the imagination and carried away even the least interested observer. Such was the prestige which everyone accorded the man who had shown himself so far above ordinary mortals, both by his personal gifts and by his destiny.

Next morning my heart beat violently when I entered the Emperor's drawing-room. He was alone near the open window returning the acclamations of the people, which rent the air. He received me coldly, embraced my children, enquired with interest about their health, after which we walked about for a few minutes without saying anything, while my children watched the crowds that thronged the gardens. Every time we approached the window the cheers increased. In vain I tried to remain in the background; I was so conspicuous that the next day the newspapers stated that the Emperor had called the crowd's attention to me and my children, an account which was altogether inaccurate as, on the contrary, he still seemed angry with me. At last he broke the silence and said: "I should never have thought you would forsake my cause."—"Forsake your cause, Sire? Would I, or even could I have done such a thing?"—"You had no right to dispose of the future of my nephews without my permission. Your husband was right to be offended."—"Sire, you do not know the reasons which made me remain in France. My mother wished me to do so. I was all she had left, My husband, as you know, offered me no support. His advice could not inspire me with any confidence. Where was I to go?"—"With your brother."—"But he had no situation of his own as yet.

He had gone to Vienna to ask for one"—"You could have gone and asked for one, too"—"Do you think I should have been allowed to do so? The Emperor of Russia proved a generous foe. He wished to assure my children's future. Could I possibly have refused him? Did anyone refuse for your son the Duchy of Parma?"—"That was quite different—that insured his independence."—"Your son, Sire, had lost more than mine. He had lost the throne of France. People considered he was fortunate in securing even so small a compensation as the Duchy of Parma. Should I have refused for my sons, who were only princes, a compensation which doubtless was still less important in itself, but nevertheless was more so in proportion to their position?"—"What does that matter? You had no business to stay in France. A bit of black bread would have been better. Besides, you need not think that your children would have benefited by these so-called advantages. In the long run they would have been got rid of. You have behaved like a child. When one has shared in the elevation of a family, one must share in its misfortunes."

At this reproof so unworthy of me and which I was so far from deserving but which seemed partly justified by my having remained in France, I could not restrain my tears. "Ah, Sire! how greatly I have been mistaken. I thought I was doing my duty in keeping your nephews from going into a foreign country. I could not write you. I vainly attempted to do so. I hoped you would be pleased that they at any rate remained on French soil in the midst of their countrymen. Where are the friends to whose care I could have confided them?"

Touched by my grief the Emperor said to me in a milder tone, 'Come, come, you have not a single good excuse to make, but you know I am an indulgent father. There! I forgive you. We won't speak of it any more. Besides, I have been told how becomingly you have behaved while living in France.'

I wished to go into details about my lawsuit and explain that I had been obliged to defend my case, but he said, "Ah! As for that, it's plain enough! You are a mother."

Admiral Verhuell* was announced. The Emperor advanced to meet him and said with emotion. "Come, Admiral, let me embrace you. I am delighted to see a hero again. If everyone had behaved as you did all those misfortunes would not have taken place." The Admiral, deeply moved, could not reply. Both men had tears in their eyes. I was delighted to see such well deserved praise given to one of my friends.

The Comte de Molé was admitted. He came to thank the Emperor, but requested to be reappointed only to the direction of the Department of Roads and Bridges, as he did not feel qualified to fill the cabinet post the Emperor had offered him. When I was alone with the Emperor he enquired, "Has Molé changed in regard to me?"—"I do not think so. He continued to come and see me, although less frequently."—"The fact is," the Emperor continued, "I wished to make him Minister of Foreign Affairs and he refuses."—"Oh, Sire! can it be that you are not going to appoint the Duc de Vicenza? Everyone knows how much he has always done to promote peace—and that is what France needs so badly."—"He is too fond of foreigners."—"But, Sire, must you not convince foreigners that you wish for peace? His nomination would be a guarantee of your intentions."—"Ah! So you go in for politics in these days," and he pinched my ear. He went on to speak of my mother, of her death and of the grief that it had caused him. "I certainly mean to have her taken to Saint-Denis, but quietly and not just yet. There have been so many of those mournful ceremonies that the nation must be tired of them. Is your brother at Vienna? I trust that he will always remain devoted to France. I count upon him absolutely. I wrote to him from Lyons. The allied sovereigns would have done nothing for him. He should be in France." I assured the Emperor of my brother's devotion, and he then dismissed me saying that whenever I wished to see him he would always receive me after dinner in the evening. He then went down the main staircase to review the troops massed in the Carrousel.

My children begged so hard to see the parade that I

* See Note p 271.

agreed. Going through the private apartments I met the Duc de Vicenza, who told me that the Emperor had proposed to him the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, but that he had refused and recommended Monsieur Molé. I made him realize all the consequences of this refusal. "It is generally known that you are the only man who has always spoken to the Emperor of peace. Your advice is now more necessary than it has ever been before. You must bring all your influence to bear against his plans for new conquests"—"I entirely agree with you, Madame, but what can I do if the Emperor has not changed and if he begins by wanting to reconquer Belgium?"—"My God!" I exclaimed, outraged, "has he already begun to speak of that?"—"No, but what alarms me is that he should have been received so enthusiastically. A little resistance would have proved more valuable. How can you expect a man not to believe that he can do everything after such a welcome, and, it may be, even want to undertake everything? Then, too, will the foreign powers be willing to discuss terms of peace? That is the great problem"—"Remember," I said, "the conversations we had with the Emperor of Russia, how anxious he was to end all this bloodshed and never to oppose the wishes of the French nation. I have no doubt that he will understand, as we do, that this extraordinary return is the wish of the immense majority of the people, and that he will not try to oppose the feelings of a nation. Anything else would be against his principles and the magnanimity he has shown. Thus the patriotic pride of the Emperor Napoleon is what most alarms me at the moment. May all those about him compel him to realize the necessity for peace!"—"No doubt," replied the Duke, "but does it depend on him alone? Is the Emperor Alexander with all his generosity exempt from passions?"

I have attended many solemn military displays, but never one that equalled the spectacle presented by this first review. The great Place du Carrousel, all the neighbouring streets, the houses, the roofs, the scaffoldings, were covered with an innumerable throng. Their frantic cheers were echoed by the cries of 'Long live the Emperor!' which

the soldiers of all the regiments and the officers of all branches of the service uttered, as they waved their helmets and caps at the end of their muskets and their swords. I remembered having seen the crowds at the height of the Empire, carried away with joy. On this occasion they were simply mad. Only the battalion from Elba was calm and silent. With a noble pride it seemed to accept its share in the popular rejoicings. The martial faces of these Grenadiers, browned by the Southern sun, their clothes still covered with dust, distinguished them from all the rest. They had arrived in the courtyard of the Carrousel at three o'clock in the morning, and had bivouacked there with a party of the 7th regiment commanded by Monsieur de Labédoyère. They had marched forty miles on foot to overtake the Emperor, as they had heard rumours of the *Chouans* who, in disguise, were to have attacked him.

When I came home at five o'clock I found General de Girardin waiting. He told me that he had gone to the camp of Méhun, determined to do his duty in favour of the Bourbons, but that everything had been in the greatest confusion, that there had been no one to take command, and that all the troops had followed the general movement and gone over to the Emperor.

Colonel de Labédoyère arrived just as I was going to dine. I asked him to stay and begged him to tell me all the circumstances of his surrender to the Emperor. He told me that when he rejoined his regiment he had not the slightest idea that the Emperor was about to land, that he could not explain the Emperor's return except as being due to the latter's wish to free his country from the humiliation into which it had fallen. He himself so soon as he heard the news believed that his country could be saved, and left Chambéry with the firm intention of helping the Emperor in his enterprise as soon as he could do so. On arriving at Grenoble Monsieur de Labédoyère, in spite of the orders issued by his general to disperse his regiment in different parts of the town, massed it in the central square and having addressed the men, sure of their adhesion he led them out to meet the Emperor. He met him about ten miles from Grenoble. The Emperor came to him, em-

braced him and gave him the tri-coloured cockade which he had on his own hat. They talked over the situation in France for a long time. Monsieur de Labédoyère took advantage of this opportunity to say, "Sire, in these days you can reign in France only by adopting liberal ideas"—"Do you think I am afraid of such ideas?" replied the Emperor "After a revolution such as had taken place in France, where every passion was roused and everyone's interests clashed, a firm hand was needed to govern the French. I, and only I, can without risk give the people the liberty they are entitled to. Everything that has taken place this last year has shown me their true wishes and their interests. The hopes they place in me will not be deceived."

After this narration, Monsieur de Labédoyère added emphatically, "Ah, Madame, if France regain her independence, and the place she ought to occupy among nations, if the Emperor will provide her with a liberal constitution; if the freedom of her citizens be assured and the laws are properly administered, I shall be happy to have contributed something to my country's salvation."

Everything about him bore the impress of a strong, generous nature. When the Emperor wished to promote him general after he had rallied to the Imperial cause, and General Drouot was sent to announce the appointment, he replied, 'Tell the Emperor that I do not want any reward. What I have done I did to serve my country. If I accept anything it will be said that I have acted from personal motives, and such a sentiment is unworthy of me.' In fact, both his family and that of his wife were devoted to the Bourbons, and Madame de Labédoyère had just recovered the large estates which had previously belonged to them. Consequently no one lost more than they by the Emperor's return. Who could help admiring such a character?

After dinner I returned to the Tuileries. The Duc de Vicenza had accepted the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs.* The Duc d'Otrante had been made Chief of Police.

The Duc de Bassano was still particularly in the good graces of the Emperor, who had dined alone with him

* See Note p. 271

There were a number of people in the drawing-room when I arrived and several ladies came later.

The Emperor chatted informally with everyone. He gave some details of his life at Elba. He mentioned what a consolation the presence of his mother and his sister Pauline had been for him, and how much he had enjoyed the quiet of the island. He had conducted his household very economically, but it cost a good deal to keep up his guard and he had begun to fear that, although the Genoese had often offered him money, he would have to dismiss it. Someone asked what had given him the idea of returning to France.

"The newspapers," he answered. "For a long time I did not receive any, and then twenty or more came at once. I saw that attempts were being made to slander the army and to disparage its former successes, while promotions and honours were being given to men who had never been under fire. Then, too, those who had purchased national properties were being harassed, and the enormous influence that the priests were beginning to exercise again must have made people fear the return of the tithe. I was sure that if I managed to land in France I should be hailed as a liberator. I felt pretty sure that those who had so long undergone hardship would use all possible means to revive worn-out ideas and undo the work of the Revolution ; but I confess that I did not think they would set about it so quickly. I admit that I thought Louis XVIII more intelligent than he has shown himself. The populace seems very much incensed against the poor priests," he continued, "for everywhere the peasants, when they came to cheer my carriage, cried "*A bas les calotins.*" The Duc de Bassano said that in many families the priests had tried to institute a kind of enquiry as to personal opinions, that fear of a return to the tithing system had terrified the peasants, and that so many gloomy ceremonies had depressed everyone.

It was already late. The Emperor retired and I, too, went home in great need of rest.

Just as I was going to bed word came that my brother's agent was sending a special messenger to Vienna to

inform him of events, and I was asked if I had any letters for him. I hastily scribbled a few lines. I spoke to him of the Emperor, of the cold reception I had received, of the general enthusiasm and finally expressed my hope of embracing my brother very shortly. I knew so little about politics that I believed that he would come back in company with the Empress and the King of Rome. In my letter I did not forget to refer to my earnest hope for peace which was the sole object of my thoughts. I had so enjoyed this year of mental repose that no other form of happiness seemed to me comparable with that freedom from anxiety. I urged my brother not to neglect any means of persuading the Emperor Alexander to sacrifice his personal animosity to the fear of a war which (to judge by the enthusiasm of the French nation) would be sanguinary and long drawn out.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HUNDRED DAYS
(MARCH 22—JUNE 10, 1815)

A letter to Marie-Louise—At Court—Public opinion—Luncheon at Malmaison—Madame Bertrand—Napoleon's life on the Island of Elba—Napoleon's mother

THE following morning (March 22nd, 1815), the Duc de Vicenza called and asked me to write to the Empress Marie-Louise in the name of the Emperor, to give her all the details of his return, and of the welcome he had received, and to say how rejoiced he would be to see her again. I hastened to fulfil the Emperor's wishes, and I so completely misjudged the attitude of the Foreign Powers towards France that I told the messenger to proceed directly to Vienna and deliver my letter to the Empress, never doubting but that on his way he would cross my brother returning to Paris. I was utterly mistaken. My letters were seized, opened and criticized.* People read all sorts of diplomatic manœuvres and dangerous insinuations into them, and my brother thought that he would be made their victim, as there was talk of imprisoning him in an Austrian citadel. Indeed, he retained his liberty only on the intervention of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Bavaria, and after he had given his word to remain neutral. When some time afterwards the Emperor informed me that my mail had been seized, I seemed so surprised that he said to me, "What did you put in your letter?"

"Only what was taking place, Sire," I replied, "but

* See Note p 271.

I am the more annoyed because I spoke of family matters I admit I am still childish enough not to believe that people can take a letter and open it when it is addressed to someone else " The Emperor laughed.

On the very day that I sent off my messenger, the Russian envoy, Monsieur Boutiguine, sent to ask if I had any commissions to entrust to him He, like the foreign ministers, had feared for a moment that he would be kept a prisoner in France. The King had sent them word that he should remain in Paris, and then had left so hurriedly that none of them had been informed of his departure. The Emperor had their passports delivered to them all The Duc de Vicenza gave Monsieur Boutiguine the treaty found in the papers of Louis XVIII, and which concerned a coalition of England, France and Austria against Russia and Prussia. Monsieur Boutiguine told me that he greatly doubted whether his sovereign would ever consent to recognize the Emperor Napoleon, because one could not have any confidence in his promises I spoke to him of the unexpectedness of the Emperor's return, which, as he was well aware, was not the result of any intrigue, and said to him, " You were a witness of the popular enthusiasm. The wishes of the country are most evident. But if the Emperor Napoleon wanted to make war he would soon lose the affection of the French, because peace is what everyone desires He is too wise and far-seeing not to accept the verdict of a great nation Thus if war does break out it will be due to the Emperor of Russia, and it would be a grief to me to think that he could ever bring such a misfortune upon us " Monsieur Boutiguine was leaving for Vienna and I gave him a letter for the Emperor of Russia, which contained nothing but the expression of my hope for peace

The Emperor was always at work. He spent part of the mornings reviewing the troops that came from every part of France He used to dine alone at nine o'clock, but after his return he formed the habit of inviting a few guests from time to time. All the generals and their wives dined with him in succession I came about half-past nine, and joined them at once, although they were still at table They often told the Emperor curious particulars about the

way of living of the King and the Princes, and a great deal was said about their eagerness to revive old long-forgotten customs. Among these they mentioned the famous regulation for the observance of Sunday and the religious processions in the streets on all possible occasions, and the Emperor's comment was that the French would never get used to such old-fashioned ways. General Albert told him how one day when the Duc d'Orléans, on leaving Lille, saw people put on the tricolour cockade, exclaimed, "How glad I should be if I could wear it with you!"—"Ah, had he been king," replied the Emperor Napoleon, "it may be I should have never come back, for no doubt he would have been more expert." Another time, when he had opened a letter from the Duchesse d'Angoulême to the King, whom she believed to be still in Paris, in which she made certain suggestions and described what she was doing to hold Bordeaux for him, the Emperor said, "She is the only man in the family." He was surprised that a woman whose misfortunes made so strong an appeal to the sympathies, had not succeeded in winning the hearts of the French. He was told that she was vindictive. I noticed that the very persons who had been most assiduous in their attentions to the King and the Princes were often the first to make fun of them, just as those who had appeared the most devoted to the Emperor had, when he left for Elba, been those who covered him with obloquy. Such a sad experience of the world, that I had learned to know so much to its disadvantage, grieved me, and made me regret my solitude.

Life at Court during this period was very strange, and gave the measure of the confidence that rulers should place in the protestations of affection and loyalty. A large number of the most fanatical royalists, believing the King's cause to be irretrievably lost, were already seeking forgiveness and trying to bury their defection under their enthusiasm for the Emperor. Members of both legislative bodies vied with one another to crowd round him, chamberlains, equerries, generals, judges, including those who had said the worst things about him in the past. They solicited

his favours and expatiated on the happiness of France in possessing him still. He, as befitted a master-mind, seemed entirely ignorant of everything that had been said and done against him. He never uttered a reproach. "There are circumstances so far above human foresight," he declared, "that it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast line of conduct. Indulgence is one of the most important qualities of a sovereign, I can forgive those who have betrayed only *me*." So he received all the women, except those who had deserted the Empress, and all the men except those who had been false to France. The only fault the Liberals could find with him was that he banished the traitors and sequestered all their property. He also took too severe measures against the King's household troops, which sowed the seed for future hostility, although they were not carried out. It might have been more politic to allow the former dukes and peers to remain members of the Upper Chamber,* for they would not have been unwilling to rally to him, but he had become accustomed to think of them as his enemies, and, convinced that they would always remain irreconcilable, he surrounded himself almost entirely with Liberals and even tried to win over the Republicans. These two classes of citizens formed the most numerous and the most energetic political group and the one most able to support his views since their interests coincided with his.

All these events made my life as busy as it had been long ago. I had not a moment to myself: all my time was devoted to other people. The Duchesses of Orléans and of Bourbon were the first whose interests I attended to, and there was a sweet satisfaction in taking this revenge on the conduct of the Royalists towards me. The Emperor granted the Duchesse d'Orléans* an income of 400,000 francs, beside the sum of 1,800,000 francs proceeding from the timber she had felled in the forests which had belonged to the State, but which she had taken over again at the Restoration. The Duchesse de Bourbon* received an income of 250,000 francs. The day after his arrival the Emperor dispatched one of his aides-de-camp to them to quiet their alarm, and I also had sent the Baron Devaux

* See Note p. 172

Madame de Vitrolles asked me for a private audience. She came with her daughter to implore me to ask the Emperor to release her husband. He had been arrested at Toulouse and brought to Paris. In 1814, before the Emperor's abdication, he had gone over to the cause of the Comte d'Artois, although still in the service of the Emperor. Madame de Vitrolles told me that she had just come from Ghent, and that she felt justified in saying that the crown jewels would be sent back if her husband were released. I replied that out of gratitude to the King, I should be pleased to do anything I could for those who had served him and needed assistance, and I promised to act as she wished. I did in fact speak of the matter to the Emperor that same evening. He answered me in an abrupt way, saying, "What does he dare to expect? Not to be taken and shot?" Instead of alarming Madame de Vitrolles by repeating this remark I merely told her that the Emperor was not yet favourably disposed towards her husband, that she must take no further action and that I would let her know as soon as I believed I could be more successful. She called my attention to the fact that her husband had been the editor of the *Moniteur*, and that not a derogatory word about me had ever been printed in it, and I requested the Chief of Police to show special consideration towards her husband. Madame de Vitrolles came to see me several times. She overwhelmed me with compliments and exaggerated expressions of her gratitude. But two months afterwards, in this same *Moniteur*, I was mentioned along with Madame Hamelin, a very intelligent woman, but not a person I received at my house, as having plotted the return of 'Emperor Napoleon, and when the writer went on to say that I was the cause of all the misfortunes that had befallen France, I knew exactly who was responsible for this attack.

Madame du Cayla sometimes came to me in the morning to confide her regret that the Bourbons had been forced to leave and her hopes that they would return. She did not conceal the fact that she was in touch with the Court at Ghent. Far from taking advantage of her confidence,

I was flattered that she had a sufficiently good opinion of my character to believe that, in spite of my situation at Court, I should not be indiscreet. Moreover, her hopes were not plots. I took advantage of the fact that she was writing to Ghent to offer my services to Monsieur Sosthènes de La Rochefoucauld, whose property had just been sequestered, although I was aware how indignant he was with me.

Monsieur de Lascours, to whom I had entrusted my letter for the King, was not able to reach Ghent, and he wished to pass it on to Monsieur de La Rochefoucauld, but the latter's remarks prevented him. Monsieur de La Rochefoucauld was sure, so he said, that my diamonds had been pawned to pay the troops to desert the King. My gentle manner had deceived him, and he had never imagined I could be involved in such intrigues.

Meanwhile, the enthusiasm of the public was calming down. Several measures had been passed which were not in accord with the ideas of the day, for everyone demanded unrestrained liberty, and it was necessary to take steps to defend the country against enemies both abroad and at home. Then, too, the refusal of the foreign governments to accept peace terms, since it foreshadowed another war, changed the feeling of the nation, which had been so favourable at first. Nothing ought to have been thought of but defence, and on all sides everyone was clamouring for Freedom. No doubt the Emperor realized that the first result of that freedom would turn against him and interfere with his plans, but, yielding to the universal wish, he gave way and drew up an additional clause in the Statutes of the Empire. It is true that this clause provided for rights which had been demanded for a long time, but the form under which they were accorded displeased everyone. In this partnership of the old and new administrations public opinion saw nothing but a forced concession to circumstances allied to a means of assuring a return to absolute power in the future. And at just the same time the envenomed criticism of certain passionate men of letters raised a movement of violent hostility to the Emperor. The flagging hopes of the Royalists revived, some of them declined the favours

they had solicited and withdrew to their country estates to await events; others decided to follow the King to Ghent to explain as best they might the reasons for their tardy devotion; others, again, remained in Paris to try to influence public opinion and help the enemies of France and of the Emperor by all the means in their power.

The return to the capital of the two kings,* Joseph and Jérôme, aroused a certain amount of uneasiness. It was feared that they might claim their former kingdoms, and that France would be obliged to reconquer them. The desire for peace and liberty, with a popular ruler such as the Emperor, that was the feeling of the day, and it was almost universal. Any plan for war or conquest would have cost the Emperor the love of the nation. The anxiety caused by the sight of his brothers was quickly calmed, for the Emperor (in order to leave no doubt as to his peaceful intentions) ordered that all his brothers resume their title of Prince and Imperial Highness. The Emperor, who had had so much difficulty in persuading his brothers to leave France to occupy foreign thrones, and who had only placed them there to maintain a vast system of international alliances, now realized that he would be obliged to keep his enemies as neighbours. But he trusted that their subjects, who for ten years had lived under a system of government similar to our own, would remain the friends of France. When nations have the same needs and aspirations the personality of the person who governs them is of less importance.

The first time that I met Prince Joseph he was very distant towards me. He did not call until long after his return to Paris and only then because the Emperor had asked him several times if he had been to see me. Jérôme came only once to my house. For a long while there had not been any cordiality between us.

The arrival of Prince Lucien* produced a contrary effect to that of his brothers. His constant opposition to the Emperor's will and the distaste that he had always shown for any high rank, had given a high idea of his character. It was well known that he had always expressed his liberal tendencies, and this was looked on as a favourable sign.

* See Note p. 272.
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He came to see me, was most pleasant, talked a great deal about my husband and urged a reconciliation between us. This I assured him was quite impossible.

One evening, when we were all with the Emperor, the question of the allowance of the various members of his family came up. "France is not rich," he said. "We must make economies. A million a year must suffice to a French prince, and as for you," he went on, looking at me, "you will only be allowed 500,000 francs if you persist in living apart from your husband. It is pure folly. You must make up your differences. Louis is getting old, he must have become more reasonable."

"Sire," I replied, "a reconciliation is no longer possible. As I did not rejoin my husband when you showed him disfavour I proved to the world that there was an insurmountable barrier between us."

"Pooh! pooh!" replied the Emperor, "what childishness!"

This conversation was like an arrow in my heart. I recalled all the torments I had been through and foresaw that my misfortunes were about to begin again.

I decided to ask for a private interview with the Emperor. He granted me one, but hardly had I begun to explain the reasons which made it impossible for me to be reconciled with my husband, when he dismissed me saying that he had work to do and that he would listen to me in the evening. I called several days in succession, but with no success. Then I wrote to him, and his reply was that we must await my husband's arrival.

Several days later I heard through Queen Julie that the King, in a letter addressed to the Emperor, had declined to come to Paris unless his brother consented to our divorce. The Emperor had treated this proposal as madness, and had made no answer. Meanwhile I was in a cruel uncertainty. It was true that I still had my son with me, but I hardly dared enjoy this happiness. A divorce was repugnant to my religious principles, while a separation and the certainty of being able to look after my children's education for some years to come was absolutely necessary to my peace of mind. Finally my entreaties obtained from the

Emperor a letter authorizing me to live away from my husband.

The fine weather made the Emperor decide to live at the Elysée in order to be able to take the air without interrupting work which was proving too much for his health. One day he sent me an invitation by the Grand Marshal to lunch with him at Malmaison,* and he named the persons he desired to find there. I admit that I could hardly force myself to act hostess at a house which I had left in one of the saddest moments of my life, and to which I had never had courage to return. Fearing that the surroundings would provoke a too painful impression, and wishing at least to yield to it without being observed, I left Paris that same evening and went to Malmaison. How deeply moved I was to behold once more the place of which my mother had taken so much care, and which was now given over to loneliness. Everything recalled her presence and broke my heart. I gave myself up to my grief. The night calmed me a little, and I was ready to receive the Emperor without appearing too much distressed. He came at nine o'clock. It was clear that he, too, was deeply moved. He walked all over the grounds with me, saying at every moment, "How all these places remind me of her! I cannot believe she is no longer here."

After luncheon he stepped into his barouche with me, Monsieur Molé and Monsieur Denon. He wished to discuss works of art with the latter. The other guests followed us in other carriages. Our drive was long, and talk turned on a thousand subjects. The Emperor praised the conduct of Monsieur de Sainte-Aulaire, préfet of Toulon, saying, "His proclamation was that of a good Frenchman who knows the horrors of a foreign invasion. All Frenchmen should agree about that. I even approve of the seemingly way in which he spoke of the Bourbons." This praise pleased me, and I added to it, for it applied to one of my close friends whose character and mind I admired.

I spoke to the Emperor about Madame de Stael having said that she intended to go to see him. He said, "I was

* See Note p 272

sure she would become my friend. At Elba I read her latest book and I cannot conceive why the French police forbade its sale here.* I found nothing in it that could give offence to the government." He also spoke of Monsieur Benjamin Constant. "He is a man of great talent. His book on the freedom of the press pleased me very much. He reasons well." He mentioned Monsieur de Talleyrand. "I knew for a long time that he was betraying me, but I never thought he would go to such lengths. I treated him as a gossip old woman, and let him chatter without heeding what he said."

On our return to the château the newspapers were brought to him. He made me read aloud his letter in the *Moniteur* to Marshal Grouchy, in which he instructed the Marshal to protect the departure of the Duke of Angoulême, who had just been arrested in the South of France. He seemed pleased both with his own magnanimity and with our approbation. Monsieur Molé said to me privately, "It is a good letter, but I am vexed that he has stipulated for the return of the crown jewels, it would have been handsomer not to ask for anything."

Before leaving Malmaison the Emperor received the authorities of the little town of Rueil, and the parish priest. On this occasion I again remarked a thing I had already noticed several times—namely, that he had no graciousness of manner, nor affectation, nor affability when he received. He went straight to the point and spoke to each person of the subject about which they had come to see him, as though he wished to gather information and to do them service. And in a sovereign this seemed to me preferable to the hackneyed phrases which may flatter people's vanity, but which do not leave any hope that they will be followed by improved conditions. Just before he stepped into his carriage the Emperor wished to see the room in which my mother died. "Stay where you are," he said, "it would hurt you too much." When he came back he seemed deeply moved.

I returned to Paris in his carriage because mine was not ready, and the Grand Marshal (Bertrand) accompanied us. The Emperor read official documents all the way, and did

not say a word. When we arrived at the Tuileries we found Monsieur de Flahaut, who had just come back from his mission of delivering messages to the Emperor of Austria and the Empress Marie-Louise. He had not been able to reach Vienna, but had been stopped at the frontier of the Kingdom of Wurtemberg and obliged to return to France. This formal refusal on the part of the Foreign Powers to receive any communication from the Emperor proved that we could not hope to reach any understanding with them.

The Emperor desired the Princes of his family to receive the various government officials. They were supposed to call first on Joseph, then on me, then on Lucien and finally on Jérôme. This order of precedence provoked violent family dissensions. Prince Lucien being older than my husband thought that he should come before me. Jérôme insisted that as he had been made prince before his brother Lucien received this title he could be inferior to him only if age were the sole basis for precedence. After a special council held to decide the matter it was agreed that the senatorial decree (*senatus-consulte*), which had established the Imperial Throne in the Emperor's family and which recognized only two of his brothers, Joseph and Louis, as members of his dynasty, could not be modified, as it had been ratified by the popular vote in 1804. To be sure, the Emperor had become reconciled to his other brothers, to Jérôme first and then to Lucien, and had conferred on them, too, the title of French princes, but this in no way altered the provisions of the fundamental law regulating the prerogatives of his family, and the order of succession to the throne. Thus it was that the Cabinet regarded the matter, and the Duc de Bassano came to tell me about it. I confess it did not interest me much. Events of very different importance were disturbing France.

Madame Bertrand, the wife of the Grand Marshal, had just arrived in Paris from Elba. She would not be separated from her husband, and when the Emperor and the Marshal had left for France she had fearlessly embarked with her children on a very small vessel. Forgetful of everything except the vivacity of her feelings, she insisted on

sailing for Marseilles without waiting to hear whether the Emperor's expedition had succeeded. The city was still under the authority of the King's Prefect when they landed, for the Duc d'Angoulême held part of the South. Madame Bertrand was shamefully received. Without respect for her sex, she was marched off to prison surrounded by a guard with fixed bayonets. Several high officials dared to say before her and her children that her husband was a brigand, who would soon be killed. What is still more inconceivable is that her sister's husband, Monsieur de La Tour du Pin, who was under many obligations to her, was in Marseilles acting as special Royal Commissioner Plenipotentiary, and did nothing to release her from her sad situation.

The Emperor's successes restored Madame Bertrand to liberty. When she arrived in Paris she insisted strongly that no one responsible for her imprisonment should be disturbed.

It was from the Comtesse Bertrand and from the Emperor himself that I heard a number of particulars about his life on the isle of Elba. He had a little country seat called Saint-Martin, to which he used to ride out daily, but this did not satisfy his need for exercise. He was very badly housed, but never complained about it. Often of an evening he would play *vingt-et-un* or dominoes. Some of the residents on the island were invited from time to time, but the Princess Pauline, Madame Mère and the members of their suite constituted his society. They did not receive any letters from France, and this absence of news made their isolation still more dreary. About New Year's Day a single letter from Monsieur Lavallette had been delivered, but it contained only New Year's greetings and expressions of gratitude. In fact, the exiles could not in any way obtain the least indication of what was going on in France. Many English people, out of curiosity, made the journey to Elba. They were cordially received, and the Emperor seemed to enjoy talking to them. Everyone questioned these visitors eagerly about France, as they were the only persons from whom some true information could be obtained.



*Carbon pencil drawing by
Princess Charlotte-Napoléone*

*Belonging to
Prince Napoléon*

MADAME MERI

Several weeks passed without any newspaper being delivered. Then all which had been delayed came at the same time. The Emperor devoured them and suddenly resolved to leave the island. He told no one but his mother, and he warned her not to speak of it to anyone, least of all to Princess Pauline, whose lack of discretion he always mistrusted. My mother-in-law has since repeated their conversation to me. They were walking, one evening, alone together in the garden: "France is unhappy," said the Emperor. "Day by day she is losing all the advantages I gained for her. Tell me, Mother, what do you think of my scheme? I should very much like to go and deliver her again." Madame Mère, quite overcome by this news, exclaimed: "Oh! let me be a mother for a moment. I will answer you afterwards." Then when she had regained her self-control she said firmly, "Yes, go, fulfil your destiny. You were not made to die upon this desert island."

Madame Bertrand told me too that Princess Pauline had done me a great deal of harm with the Emperor and my mother-in-law by repeating a thousand absurd fables that had been invented because of my having remained in France. As soon as the situation had calmed down everywhere Madame Mère landed at Marseilles, coming from Naples, whither her daughter had had her conveyed from Elba aboard a frigate, which she had had sent so soon as the news of the Emperor's evasion became known. As the Emperor had said he would send for her directly he landed in France, she thought that this was the vessel sent by him. Nevertheless (as she told me afterwards), fearing a surprise, and thinking that the Queen of Naples might take advantage of the situation to seize Elba, she took all necessary defensive measures and, as she was leaving, ordered the commanding officer not to surrender the island to anyone except the Emperor's troops. When she landed at Naples, learning her mistake and the Emperor's successes, she at once re-embarked in order to arrive promptly in France.

Marshal Bertrand came to tell me of Madame Mère's arrival, adding that she might probably decline to receive

me, for he knew that while at Elba she had condemned my conduct severely. He admitted that he had thought it best to mention this to the Emperor, and that the Emperor had replied, "What grievance can Madame have against Hortense? She herself went to see the Queen of Naples. Hortense has never done anything against me." While thanking the Marshal for his information, I said that I knew what the Emperor's family thought about my having stayed in France, and that, even though it had not helped them directly, at least it had frequently given me the opportunity to defend their cause. Moreover, since Madame was my mother-in-law I owed her respect and should therefore pay her a visit. If she did not receive me I should not repeat it. Accordingly I called on Madame. The Emperor had already been there that morning and perhaps it was to his visit that I owed my cordial reception. Madame made no criticism of any kind, and treated me just as she always had done.

CHAPTER XVII

THE HUNDRED DAYS (CONTINUED)
(12TH APRIL—10TH JUNE, 1815)

The Emperor at the Tuileries—*Père la Violette*—Rumours of divorce between Louis and Hortense—Preparations for War—The Emperor Alexander's letter—Marie-Louise—The Champs de Mars

SINCE his return the Emperor had become much more sociable. He liked to see people and granted audiences readily. I obtained one for Tallien, who had asked me to do him this favour. The Republicans knew well that their Emperor was their only salvation, and that their cause and his were the same. There was no possible reconciliation between them and the Bourbons. Thus Tallien wished to openly attach himself to the Emperor, with whom he had been on bad terms since the expedition to Egypt.

The Emperor had always been inexorable towards certain men, one of whom was Tallien, who, after having asked to accompany him to Egypt, had suddenly lost courage and returned to France without so much as warning him. He considered them deserters, and believed himself to be indulgent when he ignored their existence. Tallien, who had been useful to my mother during the Reign of Terror, received a pension from my brother. That was why he applied to me. The Emperor instantly granted his demand for an audience and Tallien came to see me when he left the Emperor. He was much moved by the way in which he had been received, and told me that as he went in he had said to the Emperor, "Sire, I once did you a wrong."—"Perhaps I have done you one too,"

replied the Emperor "For a long time I have treated you severely But who does not make mistakes? Let us forget the past and in the present need of serving our country work together sincerely"

When we were with him of an evening the Emperor liked to hear us describe what had been done and said during his absence One day the Duchesse de Rovigo told him that violets had become the rallying sign of his adherents "That explains a thing I could not understand when I saw all the bunches of violets which the women waved at me from a distance. What started the idea?" I then told him that, after he had gone, the soldiers always said he would come back when the violets bloomed and that I had been told they always referred to him as *Père la Violette* This made him laugh heartily

One day he asked me why I did not bring my children more often to see him The next day* I brought them while he was having lunch The architect Fontaine was present The question of the debts left by the Bourbon princes was being discussed. Monsieur Fontaine said that their palaces had been quickly and sumptuously furnished, especially the Palais-Royal, but that they had paid for nothing The Emperor replied that he would settle all these debts and that none of the tradespeople should lose anything, and that Fontaine was authorized to tell them so He also spoke of the temporary fortifications he was going to have built around Paris to defend the city against a surprise attack. "It will frighten the Parisians, they will think that the enemy is at the gate, but the past has taught us that it is always best to take precautions" After luncheon he received an Englishwoman, called Hamilton, I believe,¹ who presented him with a bust of Fox she had carved herself He examined it, thought it was a good likeness, and said, "This present gives me great pleasure. I esteemed Fox highly If he had lived and his advice been followed less blood would have been shed and your finances would have been in a better state"

The Emperor afterwards went into the garden (for he was still at the Elysée) and I followed him there He in-

* See Note p. 272

¹ Really Mrs. Anne Seymour Damer

formed me that my husband wished for a divorce and that without it he would not return to France. He added, laughingly, that his brother doubtless had some love affair or other in his mind, that the whole thing was simple madness and that he (the Emperor) had thought it best not to reply. I then asked him to decide the fate of my children. He told me to choose a good tutor for them, but said that he could not prevent a father, no matter how senseless he might be, from taking possession of his children. When I spoke of my fear that they might not be brought up with the care necessary to their tender age, and that it was this fear which had always led me to resist my husband's will, the Emperor replied, "What can you do? If your son had been born lame or with only one eye you could do nothing about it. There are things that can't be helped and to which one must resign oneself."

Thereupon he changed the subject and asked me whether it were true, as was reported, that Marshal Ney had said that he would bring him back in an iron cage. I answered that after the story had got about the Marshal's wife had told me it was not true. The Emperor did not seem convinced and added, "Ney firmly intended to attack me, but when he saw that his troops were against it, he found himself obliged to go with the stream. Since then he has tried to make a merit of what he could not prevent."

Finding him in a talkative mood, I took advantage of the opportunity to say that, generally, women were not for him because he did not take the trouble to make himself agreeable to them and that they exercised a greater influence on men's opinions than he believed. He began to laugh and said, "It might be well to have the Empire ruled by the distaff. After I have paid them the compliment of saying that they are well or badly dressed, what else is there for me to say? I have plenty of other things to think of. I don't know what's come over the women since I left. They all talk politics. In my day they were interested in *fal-lals*. Do you know that you too have become an important personage? People speak of you with great consideration. In Paris they go as far as to say you are the head of a political party—a con-

spirator " I replied that I was given an importance which I did not aspire and which suited neither my person tastes nor my point of view

Then I went on " I am not surprised that there has been gossip about me Your enemies have spread it to lessen the impression created by your *miraculous* return It suits them to invent a conspiracy, and as I was the only member of your family who remained in France it is natural that I should be cast for the leading part "

He then spoke of the Emperor of Russia I felt the greatest delight in telling the Emperor how perfectly kind and considerate the Emperor of Russia had been to my mother and to me and how properly he had spoke about him In short, I expressed all that gratitude and genuine friendship prompted I added that his intense desire for general goodwill convinced me that he would give his assent to the Peace He listened to me without saying a word and when I repeated what the Emperor of Russia had said about his reluctance to place the Bourbons on the throne and that it was England and Austria who had had the most to do with this, he stopped, looked at me hard and said, " Was that what the Emperor of Russia told you ? Then he is indeed a deceitful man," and he went back to his study

On my return home I found Madame Campan, who had just left Marshal Ney, and repeated to me the conversation they had had about recent events " The Queen was very rash in speaking as she did to my wife when I was leaving," the Marshal had said to her I had used to Madame Campan the same words as to Marshal Ney My opinion had been that the Emperor would succeed, but if the Marshal supposed that I had spoken as I did because I possessed some special information, he was utterly mistaken She then assured me that Marshal Ney, the bravest of the brave, was so hasty in his decisions that he frequently needed the advice of someone more versed in political matters, and that his only excuse for his conduct during recent events was that he had thereby saved the country from civil war, for he had started with the firm determination to resist the Emperor but could not do it,

that his proclamation of allegiance to the Emperor had plunged his family into despair and that his wife had not been able to conceal from him her distress at his conduct, and that politics were causing discord in many a household. The Marshal himself, quite conscious that his conduct was open to censure, answered to everything : " Women understand nothing about such things. It was all arranged beforehand," or gave some other equally futile explanation.

Meanwhile the preparations for a new campaign were pushed forward rapidly. Every Sunday newly-formed regiments of the Guard would parade through the streets. The Emperor and all the officers about him worked unceasingly at the reconstruction of the army, which had become disorganized during his absence. There was no longer any hope of maintaining peace. Anxiety and sorrow returned to Paris. The women who formed the strength of the Royalist party became active again, and used every means to detach the officers from the cause they were about to defend. Several officers after having asked to be sent on active service went over to the enemy.

One day I said to the Emperor, " Sire, while you are with the troops we shall need a man of character here in Paris. What will happen if the incidents of last year are repeated ? You cannot be everywhere at once and I feel alarmed when I see the same men as before in command." — " But I am leaving you Marshal Davoust," replied the Emperor. " He showed enough energy, I should think, at Hamburg, for you to feel reassured." — " Well and good," I answered, and said no more about it.

Two plans were discussed : Should the enemy be attacked before he had collected all his forces, or was it better to wait until he was on French soil ? Some thought it better policy for the Emperor to wait to be attacked, and until then to continue to make proposals for peace, so as to give a guarantee to the whole of Europe that he was sincerely opposed to renewed hostilities and prove that he had done everything in his power to insure peace. Others, on the contrary, believed that, since there could be no doubt as to the hostile intentions of the foreign powers, any delay might prove disastrous, and that he ought to attack

the English in Belgium before they had been joined by the other armies. One day I heard General Lobau speak to the Emperor of these two opinions and give his in favour of an immediate attack. "Wait till we are quite ready," answered the Emperor, sharply, "I only ask for a hundred thousand men and will make them manœuvre so that everyone will think that I have twice as many."

At this time Monsieur de Bourmont was in Paris without a post. The Minister of War distrusted him and had rendered the Emperor equally suspicious. Monsieur de Labédoyère who had been with him through the Russian campaign, since they had both served under my brother's orders, thought well of him, esteemed him and answered for him to the Emperor, with whom he obtained an audience for him. Doubtless Monsieur de Bourmont found means to convince the Emperor of his devotion, for he had the command of a division given him and his children received scholarships. Soon afterwards he went over to the enemy.

An incident now occurred which proved to me that the animosity of the European sovereigns for the Emperor was not diminished. One day an unsigned letter in the handwriting of Monsieur Boutiguine, the Russian *chargé d'affaires*, was delivered at my door. I learned afterwards that it had been entirely dictated by the Emperor Alexander.

Here is a copy of it.

I have delivered to our angel (a term by which he often alluded to the Emperor of Russia) all your messages. I find his principles unalterable. He loves your nation, he pities it and separates it from the man who seeks to become its ruler again. No peace, no truce nor any possibility of reconciliation with this man. All Europe feels the same. Without this man any conditions you please. No predilection for any person and once he is eliminated, no war.

I beg to offer you the expression of my respectful devotion.

A note in exactly the same terms went to the Duc de Vicenza. We felt it our duty to communicate them to the Emperor in order that he might have no illusion as to his position and that of France. I was the more anxious to do this when I learned that my brother had just told him

of the immense preparations that all the foreign powers were making against France and how impossible it would be to sustain the struggle. My brother added that he had advised him to have himself re-elected Emperor and then abdicate in favour of his son.

When I gave him Monsieur Boutiaguine's letter he read it without the slightest emotion, and as he returned it to me all he said was : "It is the same as the Duc de Vicenza's." What were his feelings? Did he suppose that it was a trap that the foreign powers had set for him in order to induce him to separate his personal cause from the national one and thus let them triumph more easily? Or did the enthusiasm which had greeted his return lead him to believe that his genius could conquer all obstacles, that it was a duty to follow the general impetus, and see in it a sign that he must be victorious, especially when he thought what a nation it was that manifested such an ardent enthusiasm for him? I leave everyone to judge for himself.

There was a thought which preoccupied the Emperor a great deal : this was the degree of affection which the Empress Marie-Louise might feel for him. The Master of her Household had just arrived in Paris. He was an intimate acquaintance of Monsieur Devaux, who was still in my employ. The Empress's steward told Monsieur Devaux that the Emperor Napoleon had sent for him and asked many questions regarding the Empress. He was asked to give up all the letters he had had entrusted to him. As he had but one and that for the Duchesse de Montebello, he dared not hand this over to the Emperor, especially as he knew it contained this sentence : "I am closely watched, but you, who know my sentiments, know how unnecessary this is," but on the other hand, he feared to get into trouble if he attempted to conceal the truth. So he came to ask Monsieur Devaux to advise him what course to pursue. Monsieur Devaux referred the matter to me. This is what I told him : "Who employs this major-domo? He must carry out his employer's orders. To do otherwise is to betray his patroness and fail in his duty." My advice was taken. The letter was delivered

to the Duchesse de Montebello and the Emperor knew nothing about it

All the news from Vienna agreed that the Empress Marie-Louise had declined to return to France. The Emperor seemed wounded by this desertion. I noticed this one day when he was speaking to me with interest about my mother and when he said, "I have no portrait of the Empress Joséphine. I should be pleased if you would give me one that is like her." I sent him one painted by Quaglia* on a porcelain cup.

The preparations for the ceremonies to be held on the Champ-de-Mars were now completed. The delegations of electors (*collèges électoraux*) arrived from every part of France as well as delegates from all the regiments in the army. The cabinet ministers were to receive them. The Emperor wished me to attend an evening reception given by Carnot, Minister of the Interior. I did so. The gathering was a large one and the musical part of the programme was executed by the students of the Conservatory. The concert concluded with a song of mine whose refrain was, "We must defend our country." It was appropriate, but I was almost embarrassed by the effect it produced. Before leaving I spoke to everyone and received from the heads of the delegations and the deputies the most solemn assurances of their devotion and affection for the Emperor's dynasty. Yet so many professions of loyalty, although too spontaneous not to be sincere, did not make much impression on me, when I reflected that a momentary misfortune would suffice to destroy their effect.

The day on which the ceremony on the Champ-de-Mars was to take place at last arrived*. The Emperor was again to be proclaimed head of the French nation by a gathering of representatives. The scene on the Champ-de-Mars was most magnificent and impressive. The centre of the great field was filled with troops and the national guard. A special enclosure was reserved near the Ecole Militaire for the legislative bodies and the delegations from the army. The latter carried the tricolour flag from which they had been so reluctant to part and

* See Note p. 272.

which were now to be blessed and returned to them. Opposite the throne was an altar surrounded by the clergy and behind the throne a gallery for the princesses and the members of the Court. When the Emperor appeared tumultuous cheers broke out. The *Te Deum* began to be sung but its solemn strains were interrupted from time to time by military music. The soldiers, whose martial aspect made them seem capable of defying the whole world, seemed really lost in religious devotion, so grave were they for a moment as they appealed for Divine protection of the cause they were about to defend. The masses of spectators by their silence, following their frantic outburst of joy, seemed to identify themselves with this august ceremony whose whole character was sacred. In the speeches addressed to the Emperor the following phrases were particularly noticed and attracted the most attention. "We will not accept sovereigns imposed on us by foreign powers. We could not trust their promises, they could not believe our oath of allegiance. We wish for rulers whom France shall herself have chosen." Then every voice was raised to "Long live the Emperor!" with here and there a cry of "Long live the Empress!" Then all the officers sprang up and exclaimed, "We are going to fetch her." The moment was a dramatic one on account of the great emotion that prevailed and the unanimity of sentiment which made failure seem impossible. Yet when for a moment I turned my eyes from the martial display before me I conjured up a vision of those other armies, the leagued forces of all Europe, bearing down upon us, and, as our defenders, this little group of heroes who alone would resist them and who might be annihilated in a few days' time.

I cannot describe the gloomy forebodings that filled my heart. Several persons noticed my emotion, and when the Emperor had proceeded to the middle of the Champ-de-Mars, where he was to review the troops and distribute the eagles, the Duc d'Otrante came up to me and enquired why I was looking so sad.

"Ah!" I replied, "after this comes war, and that is a dreadful thought."—"What's to be done?" he said

"The Emperor has just missed a great opportunity I advised him to abdicate to-day Had he done so his son would have succeeded to the throne and war would have been avoided"—"Alas," I answered, "the thought of such a frightful conflict is torture to me." But it would have needed more than human qualities not to be carried away by all this enthusiasm, and it may be, too, that the Emperor thought that instead of placing his son on the throne his retirement would merely precipitate the downfall of France As was natural, when I saw so many of my country's brave defenders gathered together in one place, I thought of my brother who was absent from their midst He still formed a target for the jealous hatred of a few persons, and doubts were expressed regarding his fidelity, and the Emperor himself said to me one day 'Why does not your brother come back? He could disguise himself A man can always get back when he really wants to'—"Sire," I said to him, "you know he was compelled under pain of imprisonment to swear that he would remain neutral and that he never breaks his word"

After the ceremony on the Champ-de-Mars we had still to attend the opening of the session of the Legislative Corps The days that followed were taken up by farewells which circumstances rendered even more painful than in former years, for never had we had more rights to defend nor so many obstacles to overcome

CHAPTER XVIII

FROM WATERLOO TO MALMAISON
(JUNE 11TH—JUNE 29TH, 1815)

Napoleon leaves for the front—Visit to Bercy—Benjamin Constant reads aloud—First news of the disaster—Return of the Emperor—At the Elysee—The abdication—Plans for flight—Napoleon visits Malmaison—Memories of Joséphine—Madame Bertrand—The day of departure—Napoleon's message to the Provisional Government—Departure of the Emperor—Hortense returns to Paris

THE day fixed for the Emperor's departure for the front was a Sunday. During the family dinner, which always took place on that day of the week, he was pretty cheerful. I may be wrong but to me this gaiety seemed forced. He spoke about literature and was more disposed to talk than usual. Madame Bertrand, whom I saw afterwards, was anxious and told me that before entering the drawing-room he had sent for her to come into his private reception room to say good-bye, and had made the following remark : " Well, Madame Bertrand, may we never regret the island of Elba ! " This doubt as to his fortune had alarmed her, for it was unusual, and I too was frightened. That evening he received all his cabinet ministers. I brought my children to say good-bye to him. He did not dismiss us till quite late and left Paris during the night.*

The Prince d'Eckmühl had remained in command of the garrison of Paris. This was somewhat reassuring, for our position, the same as that of the preceding year, made us afraid that the result might be the same. I stayed at home, seeing little of the Emperor's brothers, who treated me so completely as an outsider that I heard the most important items of news through the newspapers.

Private letters informed us that the welcome the Emperor had received in the provinces and from the troops fully equalled that which we had witnessed in Paris. Soon afterwards the sound of cannon told us of a first victory.* But how many more victims would still be required! The news of another military success, the more melancholy since it was gained against our countrymen, reached us from Vendée. Monsieur de la Rochejacquin had been killed while fighting bravely for his cause. People rejoiced at the news in my presence. I replied, "Let us mourn rather at a situation that compels us to regret less the death of a Frenchman."

A feeling which I could not explain made me want to go and see some part of Paris which I did not know and which I imagined I might be seeing for the first and last time. I visited Bercy, stopping at the house of my old school-fellow, Madame de Nicolay. There I met General de Roche-Aymon, who had always been an ardent supporter of the Bourbons. He told me what the Faubourg Saint Germain was saying about me, and ill-nature had gone to such extremes that we could not help laughing about it. Not only was I supposed to have taken an active part in bringing back the Emperor but I was also accused of having ordered General Quesnal to be thrown into the river although I had never even heard of a general bearing that name. I was not less surprised to hear Monsieur de la Roche-Aymon joke about the seriousness with which the Duc de Berry had planned his campaign before March 20th. I had thought that the only feeling that could be aroused by the fate of a family in distress and exile would be sympathy, and very often I heard jests at their expense. Marshal M——,* for instance, who believed that he was doing his duty when he conducted the king out of France and refused any other post afterwards, allowed himself to ridicule the hasty flight and fussiness of an old man. One must always be fortunate if one would avoid criticism.

I had given Monsieur Benjamin Constant an appointment to read me a short novel he had just written. We had reached the climax* and were all in tears, including the

* See Note p. 273

author, when I was told that the Duc de Rovigo wished to speak to me.

He told me that ugly rumours were abroad and that an unfortunate engagement was spoken of.* That evening his wife called with General Sebastiani. They asked to speak to me privately. Their first words were : "All is lost. Our army has been wiped out. The Emperor will be here to-night, although he did everything he could to be killed."—"Alas," I queried hurriedly, "have many Frenchmen fallen?"—"None of our friends," replied the General. "I have just left King Joseph and I read all the despatches he has received. But our disaster is complete. We have left more than 30,000 men on the field."—"Ah, our poor Frenchmen!" I cried, and I felt all my courage leave me.

But I quickly pulled myself together thinking of this last stroke of Fortune, who had left us never to return. The more cruel the wound the greater the need of courage to bear up against it. I said to the general, "*Our* cause is lost but not that of France I hope. We must not lose our heads. Should not word be sent by telegraph to General Rapp who is in command at Strasbourg, telling him to hold the town at all costs and to prepare to resist? Every effort must be made to avert a foreign invasion." The General answered, "The Emperor will be here to-night. He will think of it." I went back to my drawing-room and no one suspected my distress.

The next morning I heard of the arrival of the Emperor.* I at once hastened to the Elysée filled with emotions I cannot put into words. He was shut up with his brothers and I did not see him.* I went to Madame Bertrand, who was with her husband and who gave me particulars of what had taken place. The Emperor had returned only to ask the Senate and Chamber for prompt supplies. He still hoped that all was not over and had dispatched his aides-de-camp to rally the scattered troops.

"Ah," I said to General Bertrand, "the Emperor's cause is lost. His fate hung on a battle. He deceives himself if he thinks that he can recapture the enthusiasm which brought him back to Paris! The French are so

* See Note p. 273.

up and down. With luck everybody would have been on his side. He has been defeated, no one will support him"—"Why did we leave Elba?" Madame Bertrand said suddenly. "What will become of the Emperor now?" This idea overwhelmed us all. I should have wished him to leave at once for America. Madame Bertrand, on the other hand, insisted that the English, so liberal and enlightened in their ideas, were the only nation worthy of receiving him and capable of understanding him.

I left the Elysée on foot by the *Champs Elysées* and in order to walk a little, sent my carriage to wait for me on the *Place de la Concorde*. I had Madame Dillon with me. As we passed the gardens of the Elysée I saw an elegantly dressed lady talking to the sentry. This seemed to me extraordinary. I drew near quietly, accompanied by Madame Dillon and the lady who was in attendance. I heard the woman say, "They are deceiving you. He is lost beyond hope. He has abandoned his army"—To this the sentinel replied, "Be off! For my part I shall never desert him!"

Not being able to see the Emperor just then, I returned at six o'clock to the Elysée. He was alone in the garden. Deeply moved I advanced to greet him. I cannot say whether he wished to conceal his own feelings, but he asked me with an air of surprise, "Well! what have people been saying to you?"—"That you have met with misfortune, Sir," I replied. He was silent for a few moments, then turned and entered his study, motioning me to follow him. He appeared exhausted by moral and physical fatigue. Sitting at his desk he unsealed a package of letters, but did not read them, and it was not till dinner was announced that he seemed to realize that I was there. "No doubt you have dined already," he said. "Will you come and keep me company?" I followed him. During dinner he made only a few insignificant remarks. He seemed absorbed in meditation. He went back to the drawing room, where his brothers and mother joined him, and passed into the garden with them, and I left the palace.

The Senate and Chamber, so I was told, were determined

to depose the Emperor unless he abdicated immediately, and he was assured that this was the only way of saving France from an invasion. The Powers had said so. Monsieur de Metternich, too, had written it to the Duc d'Otrante, who, secretly, had shown the letter to all the members of the Chamber. Thus the Emperor, who had turned to the centre where all the national forces converged hoping to kindle all their energies, found everyone against him.

Those officers who had escaped after the defeat, envied the fate of their brothers-in-arms lying dead on the field of honour, and, unable to see any hope of sustaining such an unequal struggle, many despaired utterly of their country's cause ; others, full of trust in the promises of the foreign powers, imagined that if the Emperor were removed, the nation could have a king of its own choice, not one imposed by force : others again thought that anything would be better than the danger of placing their country at the mercy of the conquerors.

Monsieur de Labédoyère was one of those who held the latter point of view passionately. He regretted that the Emperor had not presented himself before the legislative bodies covered with the dust of battle, as had been agreed when he left the army. To separate him from the nation was to sacrifice the Emperor without saving the country. Monsieur de Labédoyère declared that every Frenchman ought to rally to the eagles, become a soldier and, inspired by the Emperor's military genius, rise to those heights of heroism which had assured the triumph of our Revolution. Failing such heroic resolution, he foresaw for us all the effects of a blind confidence—the Bourbons first, and in their train, tribute money, personal revenge, and national humiliation.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives, eager to repudiate the man who, in its opinion, had become the sole obstacle that stood between the French people and peace, clamoured for abdication and discussed the principles of political freedom, as though Europe in arms were advancing to defend ideals ! As for the Emperor, what could he do alone ? Once more genius was obliged to

bow before the mistaken judgment of the masses. He abdicated in favour of his son.

King Jérôme* had shown great courage at Waterloo and had been wounded there. He returned to Paris. Monsieur de Flahaut and all the other aides-de-camp whom the Emperor had dispatched to rally the scattered troops and mobilize the National Guard came to report the result of their mission. They told us that there were still many more troops available than we believed, but that the news of the Emperor's abdication had caused widespread discouragement and that many of the soldiers had thrown down their arms and returned to their homes.

While we were mourning the death of so many heroes, the royalist ladies gave way to exhibitions of indecent rejoicing. Hatred for a certain dynasty, an ardent desire to see it overthrown I can understand, but that a victory won by our enemies, the humiliation of our country and the immolation of thirty thousand Frenchmen, should be a subject of triumph to other Frenchmen, is a thing that I shall never comprehend.

I spent all my time at the Elysée. A crowd constantly stood outside the garden, for some people were as eager to see their unhappy sovereign as others to fly from him. The constant cheering of this crowd had something very poignant about it since, in this hour of distress, it recalled the memories of the past. Some officers who caught sight of the Emperor walking in the garden, even scaled the wall, and throwing themselves at his feet exclaimed, 'Do not abandon us!' The Emperor himself seemed affected by this devotion. The Préfet de Police, Réal, witness of this touching scene, took me aside and said 'And to think, Madame, that, acting on orders received from the Provisional Government, I have had money distributed to quiet this popular enthusiasm.'

As for me, my one thought was How to save the Emperor. I saw that he was for ever talking things over with his brothers without coming to a decision. The longer he waited, the less he was master of his fate, but it seemed that no one, not even he, cared what happened to him. I was in despair at this irresolution. This

* See Note p. 271.

apparent calm, this immobility excited in me the impulse to impart to someone the thoughts that no one else seemed to hold any longer. Madame Mère was my first confidante. She encouraged me, and I decided to go into the Emperor's study. He was sitting facing the fireplace. Méneval, his former secretary, stood beside him. My heart beat violently. I was intimidated at coming to offer advice to the man who had never accepted it from anyone, but the thought of the danger he was in gave me courage, and I burst out with : " Sire, don't trouble about the French, they're not worth it, as they desert you. Only think of yourself. Don't lose an instant in insuring your own safety ! If you choose America, make haste to reach a port before the English can hear of it. If you prefer Austria, make terms at once. Perhaps its sovereign may remember that you are his son-in-law. As for the English, you'd do them too much honour and they would imprison you in the Tower of London. The Emperor of Russia is the one man you can trust. He was once your friend. He is loyal and generous. Write to him. He will appreciate it." To all this he did not answer one word. He listened with a calm that contrasted strongly with my excitement, and then said, " And you ? What do you think of doing ? Will you go to your place near Geneva ? " I admit that I could not resist feeling an irritation to be still treated as though I were a child. " Ah ! Sire, I don't care what becomes of me," I cried, " I can only think of you. The worst of the courses I suggest is better than the inaction in which I see you."

At this moment one of his chamberlains, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, came in through the private apartments. " Well ! " said the Emperor, " you have come from the Chamber of Deputies ? What are they doing ? " " The attitude of the members is a thoroughly satisfactory one," replied the chamberlain with a satisfied air. " Napoleon II has been proclaimed amid much enthusiasm."—" But," interrupted the Emperor, " what is being done ? "—" The articles of the Constitution are being discussed."—" Ah ! " exclaimed the Emperor, rising abruptly, " we have gone back to the days

of Byzantium discussions when the enemy is at the gates ! ”

A few minutes later I saw the Duc de Vicenza, to whom I related my conversation Like me he leaned towards Russia, and the next day, when speaking to the Emperor on the same subject, he received the following answer “ Austria, never They have wounded me too deeply by keeping my wife and my son Surrender to Russia is to give myself up to a man Surrender to England, to give myself up to a nation ”

One evening when I was at the Elysée the Emperor came up to me and said “ Malmaison belongs to you I should be very glad to go there and I should be pleased if you would stay there with me. I will go there to-morrow but I do not wish to occupy the Empress's rooms ” I expressed my joy at being of use to him and made all arrangements for leaving home Several of my friends, when they heard of it, came to me and implored me not to stay at Malmaison They said that Paris was furious with me and that every sort of slander would be spread to lose my reputation, and that I must remember the scandalous things that had been invented about me in times past If I stayed with the Emperor up to the last moment I should prevent the allied sovereigns from being able to continue their protection of me. All these arguments might have influenced me if I had been petty enough to stop at such a moment to consider my private interests. I answered that I should never abandon the man whom I had called my father, that now that he was unhappy was the time to show my gratitude, and that, upheld by the approval of my conscience, I should feel myself above the criticism of society It did not matter if others were displeased with my conduct as long as I, personally, approved of it. As for the allied sovereigns, all that I begged of their bounty was a passport which would allow me to retire to some far-off secluded spot !

The next morning* I left, accompanied by Madame d'Arjuzon, after having concealed my children in the house of a person whom I could trust in order to be able to devote all my attention to the Emperor * I reserved one wing of

* See Note p. 273.

the château for him alone, and I kept the other, containing the Empress's apartment, for me and our attendants. I made the small gallery into my dining-room, where I and my suite could dine. The Emperor arrived in the morning, and I went to meet him sadly, thinking how this same spot, which he had visited at the height of his glory and happiness, received him to-day reduced to the last stage of misfortune, for he did not even find the loving friend of other days, so tender and devoted. I, the daughter of that companion, was able to offer him only a little care and a few attentions, and I was conscious of all I lacked. I told him the arrangements I had made and he approved of them. Then I left him, asking him to send for me whenever he might happen to want me.

That same evening the Emperor's brothers with the Duc de Bassano and Monsieur Lavallette came out to see him. I remained in my own drawing-room with the officers of his household and of mine. We were all entirely taken up with trying to think of some way of saving him. The young officers who had not consented to leave him maintained that the Royalists would try to kidnap him, and they prepared for a defence. None of them went to bed. Thirty men from the Dragoons regiments, who had remained at the dépôt, wounded and only half-armed, with a dozen young officers, were all the force we could muster. These gentlemen, however, reassured me by the opinion they had of the Royalists, whose courage afforded the subject for a good many jokes. I retired late with Madame d'Arjuzon, leaving all the men on the watch.

The morning following his arrival at Malmaison, the Emperor sent for me at eleven o'clock. He was walking alone in the gardens. The weather was magnificent. He asked me how I was and how I had spent my evening but did not wait for a reply, and continued, "My poor Joséphine! I cannot get used to this place without her! Every moment I expect to see her come out of the avenues to gather the flowers she loved so much! Poor Joséphine!" Then seeing how this topic saddened me, he said, "But still, she would be very unhappy now.

There was only one subject we ever quarrelled over, her debts, and most assuredly I scolded her enough about them. She was the most enchanting being I have ever known. She was womanly in every sense that word conveys, vivid, lively and so tender-hearted. Have another portrait made of her for me. I want it as a medallion." I promised to have this done.

The Emperor's brothers came with his mother, who seemed very dejected. I called King Joseph aside and reiterated my prayer that he would urge on the Emperor the necessity of deciding on some line of action. He would make no better answer than, "You are right," and I withdrew. For that matter each person's attitude was natural enough, for the Emperor's one thought was to save France and I thought of nothing but how to save him.

In the drawing-room I found Monsieur de Flahaut, Monsieur de Labédoyère and the Duc de Rovigo, who told me that Paris was quiet and that only a few Royalists were to be seen, holding their heads high. A moment later a man came to inform the Duc de Rovigo of the plot formed by five hundred Royalists to assassinate the Emperor that night, and the Duchesse de Rovigo, coming from Paris, had met several men on horseback on the way to Malmaison, among them one of her cousins, who was a furious royalist. This news was passed on to the Emperor, who paid no attention to it. Towards nightfall our young men, who during the day had gone to Paris, began again to prepare for a sudden attack. The idea of seeing men fight and kill one another before my eyes, made me tremble, and when I heard someone say, 'We will defend ourselves as they did at Bender' I did not know whether, if such a thing happened, I should show any pluck. During one of these conversations, which were repeated over and over again, we heard the report of a pistol. Everyone was startled except the Emperor, who did not seem to have noticed it. Our guard dashed into the park. Nothing

* *Bender*. A fortress of Bessarabia. It was, no doubt, through Voltaire's delightful history of Charles XII of Sweden that the story has become a proverb. In 1713, with 300 Swedes and a few Poles, and later with 600 men, Charles sustained the siege of a little country town against 80,000 Turks, who reduced the improvised fort only by setting it on fire.—*Trans.*



*Water colour by
A. Garner*

THE NAPOLEON MUSEUM AT PARIS

*Belonging to
Prince Napoleon*

was found there and everything calmed down once more. Had the Provisional Government, which longed for the Emperor to leave, hired someone to make a demonstration? No one ever knew what had taken place.

No emotion was spared me. I was forced to witness another painful scene. Two generals who had gravely compromised themselves on behalf of the Emperor, hurried to Malmaison with the news that the Provisional Government was selling France to the Bourbons, that the scaffold awaited those who had taken sides with the Emperor, that flight was absolutely urgent but that they lacked the means to escape, and that, unless the Emperor provided the necessary funds, they would blow their brains out in his presence. I would willingly have taken this trouble upon myself to spare him who so needed to think of himself, but the generals insisted too urgently on seeing him for me to dare to refuse them, and they obtained what they asked for.

Then, too, I received the wife of General Girard, who had been mortally wounded at Waterloo, and left alone dying at an inn fifty miles from Paris. His wife was penniless, and in great distress as she wanted to reach her husband quickly. But I had scarcely had time to speak of it to the Emperor when the poor woman heard that the General had breathed his last. So, you see, none of the tortures that follow calamity was hidden from me.

General Drouot, who felt that the army was in desperate need of its leaders and that at such a time he could be more useful to his country than to his sovereign, decided to act in obedience to the Emperor's suggestion, and assume command of the Guard. He left for the front after taking leave of us.

We were constantly on the alert, but as our army drew nearer Paris the Royalists trembled, and a surprise attack on Malmaison grew more unlikely. In the evening the Emperor received an officer who came on behalf of the army to urge him to place himself once more at the head of his troops. I do not know whether the Provisional Government was informed of this, but the next day it sent General Becker* to take over the command of our

* See Note p. 273.

personal body-guard When Madame d'Arjuzon repeated to me a remark the General had had whispered to her at dinner-time "*They fear he may attempt some rash enterprise,*" I knew for sure that we were really under supervision and cried out in anguish, "Who could have supposed that I should live to see the Emperor the prisoner of the French at Malmaison!" Yet as he was surrounded by a group of young men devoted to the Imperial cause, General Becker's mission could not have had any effect.

All the young officers were eager to see the Emperor leave at once, place himself at the head of the army, take his chance, and try to save France I, and I alone, being calmer than they, thought that the time for such an attempt had passed. Too many political parties had now openly declared against him Deserted by the representatives of the nation, who alone could have supported him, his only thought should now be to insure his own safety and escape at once from France Well! Paris still talked about the wild plans made in the drawing-room at Malmaison and instigated by me!

My fears for the Emperor's future calmed down a little when I heard that two frigates were waiting for him in the harbour of La Rochelle In connection with this, however, a difficulty arose. The Provisional Government wished the Emperor to proceed aboard immediately, and he, on the other hand, wished first to have the assurance that it was he who would decide whither the vessels were to proceed Monsieur de Flahaut was sent to Paris to arrange about this and there was rather a violent scene between him and the Minister of War, the Prince of Eckmühl, in which the latter forgot himself so far as to declare that he would arrest the Emperor himself if he did not leave the country Monsieur de Flahaut, indignant and scornful commented "This language does not surprise me from a man whom I have always seen grovelling at the Emperor's feet" The discussion about the frigates still further delayed the Emperor's departure To me each day's delay seemed fatal and to lessen his chance of escaping from the English I made another effort with King Joseph, with whom the Emperor talked more than to anyone else I insisted on

the urgency of the Emperor leaving France, and that even a few hours' delay might mean that he would not be able to slip away, and that with the passport of some man about his own size he ought to get to Le Havre and embark, while I undertook to guard Malmaison and to arrange matters in such a way that people should think he was still with us. However, nothing was done, and the days passed without altering the situation in any way.

At noon one day the Emperor sent for me. He was in his private garden with a man I did not know and a little boy who seemed to be about nine or ten years old.* Taking me aside, the Emperor said: "Hortense, look at that child. Whom is he like?"—"He is your son, Sire. He is the very image of the King of Rome."—"You think so, do you? Then it must be true. I, who did not think myself a man of feeling, am moved by the sight of him. You seem to know about his birth, how did you hear about it?"—"Sire, the public has spoken a great deal about it and this likeness shows me that people were not mistaken."—"I admit that for a long time I doubted if he was really my son, but all the same I had him educated in a boarding-school in Paris; the man in whose charge I had placed him wrote to me to ask my intentions in regard to his future. I wished to see him and, like you, I was struck by his resemblance to my son."—"What are you going to do with him, Sire? I should have been glad to look after him, but do you not think that to do so would give people a chance to say more ill-natured things about me?"—"Yes, you are right. I should have been glad to know that he was with you, but people would certainly not miss the opportunity of saying that he was your son. When I have settled in America I will send for him."

He then rejoined the gentleman who was waiting a little distance off, and I went up to the boy, who was as lovely as an angel. I asked him if he was happy at school and what games he played at. He answered that lately he and his companions had pretended to make war on each other. There were two sides, one called the Bonapartists, the other the Bourbonists. I wanted to know which side he belonged to. "I am one of the King's men," he said, and when I

* See Note p 273.

enquired the reason he answered, "Because I like the King and I don't like the Emperor." I saw how far he was from having the slightest suspicion of his birth or whom he had come to see. His position seemed so strange that I asked him why it was he did not like the Emperor. "I have no reason except that I belong to the King's side," he said, and then the Emperor joined us, took leave of the man who was in charge of the boy, and went in to luncheon. I followed him and he repeated, "The sight of that child moved me. He is like my son. I did not think I was capable of such feeling as he aroused. And so you were really struck by his likeness to my son and to me?" All luncheon time he referred to the subject.

Monsieur Gabriel Delessert arrived from Paris to inform me that one of General Exelman's aides-de-camp, who had just left the advanced posts, thought that the enemy's troops were moving in the direction of Saint-Germain and that beyond doubt their intention was to cut off the Emperor's retreat. He was in his study. I went to give him this news and he sent for Monsieur Delessert, and in my presence asked him for some explanations of what he had told me. A large map was open on the table with the position of the various army corps marked by pins. The Emperor changed several of them in accordance with what Monsieur Delessert told him. He enquired the estimated force of the enemy troops that were surrounding Paris and on M. Delessert's reply exclaimed "Poor France! To think she must submit to a handful of Prussians!"

When I was again alone with the Emperor I ventured to ask him some questions about our position. I enquired if our forces were larger than those of the enemy. "Certainly not," he replied, "but what cannot one do with Frenchmen!" The Duc de Bassano and Monsieur Lavallette were announced and I withdrew.

Several ladies from Paris came out in the evening to say good-bye to him. Madame Duchâtel was among them. He received them all in his study and I did not see him again till the next day.

When I awoke I was told that the young Polish woman

Madame W——, had already arrived, accompanied by her children,* that she had said farewell to the Emperor and that she had asked to see me. She was all in tears and quite upset me too, and I invited her to stay and lunch alone with me so that people might not see the state she was in.

I learned, when I went into the drawing-room, that the Minister of the Marine had come during the night, that at last the Emperor had been granted full command of the two frigates so that there was now nothing to prevent his leaving. At that moment he was engaged in examining the carriages chosen for his journey and the persons who attended him came back indignant at the bad state they were in. Doubtless the equerry in charge, who had retained his post in spite of the various political upheavals, hoped to make his future equally safe and was already showing his devotion to the next ruler by giving the least valuable carriages to the Emperor. I proposed my travelling coach to him, but he declined, as he wished to leave in an open carriage. He asked me what my plans were and what means I possessed. I told him that all I had were my own diamonds and my mother's, because long-standing debts had absorbed her estate, but that I should retire to Switzerland, where I wished to live quietly, and that I had enough money to do this. I added that it might be useful to him to take a few diamonds with him and that mine were at his service. It was he who had given them all to me and they belonged to him. He consented to take one string worth about two hundred thousand francs, and insisted on giving me a note for this amount,† although I obstinately resisted his doing so, regretting bitterly to be able to do so little for him to whom I owed everything. Then, for the first time, he talked to me about his plans, told me he was going to the United States, that the only thing those who bore his name had to do was to join him there. "That is the only way your children can succeed," he said, "for if the Bourbons come back on the throne they will stay longer than people think."

Just then we heard shouts from the highway. We went to see what was going on. All the people in the château

* See Note p 273
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† See Note p 274
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joined us. We saw several hundred soldiers, facing towards Malmaison, throwing their hats in the air and crying, "Long live the Emperor." They were being sent to Saint-Germain. The enthusiasm they displayed for the man who was obliged to leave them, made a deep impression on all who were there. The Emperor seemed moved by it, but, said he, "It is not cheers I am in need of but actions," and he withdrew to his study. His mother and his family came to receive his farewells. Madame Mère asked me what she ought to do until the time came for her to join her son in America. I advised her to return to Paris, thinking that there she could receive nothing but kindness from everyone, including the enemies of her son. It would not be possible for us to remain isolated at Malmaison after the Emperor's departure, nor could we, without passports from the allied sovereigns, risk making our way through the hostile armies. Passports were the only favour we asked. The Emperor of Russia would certainly not refuse so simple and so justified a request for a thing to which we were entitled.

Madame Bertrand, having made all her preparations for accompanying her husband in the Emperor's suite, arrived from Paris. With her usual vivacity she sustained her opinion that he ought to take refuge in England where he would be marvellously well received. She went to see him in his study and told me afterwards that when she expressed her fear of witnessing a naval battle he had promised not to fight if he encountered English vessels at sea. She gave me the particulars with which he had entertained her about his establishment in America, where he intended to live as a private citizen. "Queen Hortense must come with her children," he had added, "she will make our sojourn agreeable." We entreated Madame Bertrand not to attempt to follow her husband until he had reached his destination, but her ardent attachment to him made him reject any thought of being separated from her. She roused the greatest interest by the courage with which she faced such hazardous adventures—and it may be, too, a little envy of the domestic happiness that made such courage seem quite natural to her. She and I spent the whole

evening walking about together. The weather was superb and the stillness of night in striking contrast to the agitation of our thoughts. We had been seated side by side for some time on a rustic bench, when we beheld the Emperor himself who had come to join us. He seemed to share the peaceful influence of the restful scene, for as he sat beside us he exclaimed: "How beautiful Malmaison is! Would it not be delightful if we could stay here?" I could not reply. My voice would have betrayed my emotion. It was the first time I had ever seen him seem attached to any particular spot, and I was the more surprised because I had not believed him capable of yielding to such impressions. But when men desert us we turn instinctively to Nature, who does not deceive us. Besides, could anyone leave a spot where he had been happy and which he will never see again, without regret? A spot associated in his mind with visions of glory, fame, fortune and happiness, a spot where so many hearts submitted to his spell, whence he set forth to subdue the world, and where now he is spending the last days that he will be allowed to live in his own country, before setting out alone, an exile, to face an uncertain fate!

The evening passed as the others had. We remained in the drawing-room talking about the Emperor's journey with the persons who were to accompany him, and he stayed in his study with the Duc de Bassano.

The next morning (June 29th, 1815) all was ready for the departure. King Joseph arrived early. He was shut up with the Emperor, when Rousseau, my footman, brought me a letter from Paris. My entire household was in a state of intense anxiety, for they supposed the enemy to have reached Malmaison and imagined that it was impossible for me to return to Paris. The bridge at Neuilly was barricaded, and Monsieur de Brack, the young man who had talked to me at the masked ball and who was a major in the Lancers of the Guard, had come to enquire anxiously about me and announce the danger we were in at Malmaison, since the enemy's outposts were already encircling the capital. I hastened to the Emperor's

study to communicate this news to him. He received it very calmly and said that things were not so alarming as people supposed, but that, nevertheless, it would be more prudent for me and all the other ladies to return to Paris.

"Sire," I replied, "the only person I am anxious about is you. Believe what has been told me, because it comes from a brave young officer"—"My child," he answered, "we know what war is. Go home at once and take Madame Bertrand with you, for I shall be able to do nothing with her husband so long as she is here."

I implored him to leave at once, to think of the exasperation of the enemy's army. "The Prussians are leading the advance," I said to him, "and you have everything to fear from their fury"—"What can they do?"—"Sire, they might go as far as to assault you personally"—"Very well, then, I will go," he answered with an air of indifference and resignation, more to satisfy me than because he was convinced that there was danger. He sent for Monsieur de Résigny, one of his orderly officers, and sent him to reconnoitre how far away the enemy were.

Monsieur de Flahaut and Monsieur Lavallette came from Paris and confirmed the news I had received. Then, as though the approach of the enemy made him forget everything except the danger which threatened France, the Emperor, with deep emotion and a great consciousness of his strength, addressed these gentlemen in words which have left too deep an impression on my mind for me to be able to forget them. "Go to the Provisional Government and tell them that I can still collect the army. I can check the enemy's advance and give the Government time to safeguard the interests of France and negotiate for her rights and liberty with the allied sovereigns. I promise on the faith of a general, a citizen and a soldier, to leave the country on the same day as I shall have delivered the capital." After these words he dismissed them.

Meanwhile the orderly-officer, Résigny, who had been sent to the bridge of Chatou, returned. He had arrived at the village of Chatou just as, by order of the Minister of War, the bridge was blown up. We saw it burn from our windows and it proved to us that the enemy was really

close at hand. The two gentlemen (de Flahaut and Lavallette) had scarcely left on their mission* before I was anxiously expecting their return, and the conversation of the young officers who were to accompany the Emperor was by no means reassuring. They continued to prepare for an attack, and the idea of seeing the Emperor in the hands of the Prussians revolted them to such a degree that I heard Gourgaud say: "I should believe that I was doing him a service if I took his life rather than let him fall into the hands of his enemies."

To my great satisfaction the post-horses arrived; but at this moment when I thought the Emperor was, at last, going to start, he had ceased to think about it! Impatient to know the answer of the Provisional Government, he had enough prestige with General Becker (whose mission it was to guard him) to persuade him to accept and fulfil the same charge as he had just given to M. de Flahaut and M. Lavallette. This delay distressed me greatly. I was certain that the Emperor's offer would be refused and the danger was increasing hour by hour. I took him the diamond collar which he had finally consented to accept, and that I had arranged and sewn into a ribbon so that he could wear it as a belt, and I fastened it on him myself.

Monsieur de Flahaut was announced. He described the failure of his embassy. The Emperor said to him: "Why wouldn't they accept? They are still afraid of me, are they not?" Monsieur de Flahaut replied that the heads of the government feared that the Emperor's presence would prove an obstacle to the negotiations and make people doubt their sincerity, but he added that he himself thought that the government was, in truth, alarmed at the idea of seeing the Emperor once more at the head of his army from which, perhaps, he might not be willing to separate.

"Did you repeat faithfully the terms of my promise to leave as soon as I had saved Paris?"—"Yes, Sire."—"Then," said the Emperor with a gesture of decision, "They refuse. Come, let us be off. I have nothing to reproach myself with. I have done my duty to the end.

* See Note p 274

I wanted to make one more effort to save France and they insist on throwing her to the mercy of her enemies !”

I embraced him with tears in my eyes. He bade me farewell, begged me again to return quickly to Paris and to take Madame Bertrand with me. But we both resolved not to stir until we knew what had become of him.

The Emperor spent his last moments shut up with his brother Joseph. He had taken off his uniform and put on a grey dress-coat.* General Becker returned from Paris, bringing the same reply as Monsieur de Flahaut had already delivered, and as his return was what we were all waiting for, the travelling carriages were brought up to the door. The Emperor had with him, General Becker, General Bertrand and the Duc de Rovigo. In another carriage were Colonel Gourgaud, Messieurs de Montholon, de Las Cases and Lallemand.* Others who accompanied the Emperor, but who left by another road, were Messieurs de Résigny, Palnat, Chaipe, Autric, Sainte Catherine d'Audiffredi.*

Far from rending my heart as it should have done, this parting relieved my soul of a weight which had oppressed it for a long time. For I believed that a life and liberty most precious to me were at last out of danger and that the future held no menace in store for them. How mistaken I was ! Before returning to Paris I walked down the handsome gallery at Malmaison, where so many precious works of art were collected. These, in addition to my diamonds, were all the fortune that was left me. I thought then for the first time, that here was all my children's inheritance and that I had completely forgotten to give any orders to have these things taken to a place of safety. Entirely absorbed by the Emperor, how could I have a thought for anything except his fate ? The allied troops were now too close at hand for me to have all these paintings sent to Paris, so I bravely made up my mind to lose them, if fate so decided, and I hastened to rejoin my children.

I set out accompanied by Madame Bertrand, Madame d'Arjuzon and Madame Caffarelli. The latter, though not a member of my household, had come daily to Malmaison to place herself at my disposal and offer to help

me in any way that was possible. How sweet it is, in such sad hours, to meet with disinterested devotion ! I was obliged to take the cross-roads and return to Paris through Saint-Cloud, for the bridge at Neuilly was already barricaded. Madame Bertrand entertained us the whole way, talking of her journey and her fears for her children. I proposed to take charge of her little girl who was ill, but she could not bear the idea of being separated an instant from any one of the objects of her affections. I remarked to her that, though she was to be pitied because of her position, yet she was to be envied too, because the courage with which she accepted everything had its source in a happiness which no political misfortune could affect.

CHAPTER XIX

THE ROAD TO EXILE

(JUNE 29TH, 1815—JULY 24TH, 1815)

Public opinion—The Chamber of Deputies—The Evacuation of Paris—The Emperor of Russia and Hortense—The Queen is ordered to leave France—Her departure—An incident at Dijon—At Poligny—Into Exile

ON my return home I found everyone alarmed as to my fate and ready to believe that I had been taken prisoner by the enemy. My children had remained hidden in a private family. Paris still seemed fairly quiet. Only the upper classes were excited, and I, pleased to have done my duty to the end, was prepared to wait further events with courage and resignation.

Our troops re-formed before Paris. The army wished to defend itself under the walls of the capital and save our national honour. The Chamber of Deputies was busy drawing up a Constitution while the Provisional Government negotiated with the Foreign Powers to prevent the further shedding of French blood, and to insure the country's position as a nation. The women of my acquaintance spent every morning at my house. Each had a different opinion, and they kept me informed of the talk of the town. They were all excited and nervous, while my self-control surprised them. Yet what could be more natural, their future was undecided, mine was settled. I had done no harm, I asked no favour, I wished to retire from the world, and I imagined that nothing could be more simple. So I listened to the plans of all who came to see me with sympathetic interest, and I was probably the only person able to see how incoherent those plans were.

One day a Monsieur Courtois, a leading man of the old Republican party, called at my house. I did not know him. He came as delegate from the colonels of the army assembled at La Villette [the N.E. of Paris]. Their plan was to kidnap the members of the Provisional Government, suspected of being in touch with the Bourbons, and call the Emperor back to defend the capital. Monsieur Courtois had been sent to see me on behalf of the army to find out if the Emperor had really left. I assured my visitor that he had, and at the same time with all my strength opposed an enterprise which might lead to such disastrous results. I knew the integrity of the Duc de Vicenza, the patriotism of Carnot, and doubted if even Fouché would betray his country, but the Emperor having left, was there a man able to unite all political parties and save France? At such moments the gravest of all dangers is disorder. Without a leader, without unity of purpose, what can one undertake? I heard later that the Emperor had spent the night at Rambouillet (June 29th-30th). Did he know of the intentions of the army? Did he expect to be summoned, to be appealed to, to be forced into an attempt to save the country? I fancy so, but at the time I believed that he was already a long way off.

The troops, who were dissatisfied, received orders to pass round the capital without entering it. Stories of loot were spread in order to frighten the Parisians. The French soldier, whose only idea was to combat the enemy, was represented as a creature more dangerous than the enemy himself. In answer to these slanders the generals on their way to the other side of Paris marched through it from end to end in spite of the order not to do so, and in perfect order. All the experienced officers said that the Prussians had made a great mistake in marching towards Versailles, and that it would be easy to defeat them by making an attack from Saint-Denis. The government, still believing in its negotiations and thinking itself in 1814, calmly looked on at the approach of an enemy whom it supposed to be in the same state of mind as itself. The habit of feeling itself to be a great nation gives pride to a country, and the pride remains for a long time, but it

the resolution to uphold its rights has weakened it is only vain appearance.

I have heard it said often enough (and who does not know it?) that the authority of a legal constitution is always preferable to that of a single man, but, at this moment, the memory of all the great things the Emperor had accomplished filled my mind. Had he not rescued the country from anarchy, established a throne founded on the essential equality of all men, raised France to the pinnacle of fame, re-established her finances, religion, industry and social order? In short the host of glorious and useful acts by which the nation had benefited because they were the product of his genius? Yet the author of all this was forsaken and left exposed to all sorts of dangers, including the revenge of his enemies. Here indeed was food for thought! When I yielded to my emotions I accused the French of being ungrateful, unjust and unstable in their affections. And then, with an inexpressible heartache I remembered the day of my early girlhood, when I had read the "Life of Hannibal." I was touched and indignant at his sad end. The Emperor—he was Consul at the time—said to me, "It is the end of almost all great men." My mother and I exchanged glances, for already he was great himself.

Our position was becoming dangerous. Royalist refugees returned to the capital in disguise. Monsieur de Vitrolles had been released from prison by Fouché. General Exelmans, when he heard of it, had him re-arrested and confined in a room at Vaugirard, where his troops were stationed. The general went into Paris to spend the evening, and when he reached home Monsieur de Vitrolles had again escaped. Monsieur Hyde de Neuville, who had been compromised in the affair of the infernal machine,¹ contrived to escape about this time, thanks to the help of the Baron Devaux. He was now in hiding in Paris. He called on Monsieur Devaux and told him that he would see to it that I was not harmed if I would sign and would persuade my friends to sign a paper urging all the generals I knew to

¹ The attempted assassination of Napoleon, Rue Saint Nicolas See Vol I
p 62 (Translator's note)

go over to the Bourbons. He showed a list already filled with the names of prominent marshals and generals. I replied that everyone was master of his own fate, that I would not undertake to influence anyone. I had no favours to ask, and I would sign nothing.

Meanwhile, the French troops were passing through Paris without provoking the least disorder. Many officers came to see me in the evening. I have never seen such a martial spirit as that which animated the younger officers at a time when many of those higher in rank were already making peace with the Bourbons. These older officers considered that the return of the Bourbons to the throne was inevitable, but that whoever the king might be it was the foreigners who were really to be feared. I pitied men so blinded by their personal interests. I regretted that I was not a man, for I felt that all was not yet lost, and that if France only knew how to take advantage of the ardour of all this youth she could at least defend her own national interests and not throw herself blindly on the generosity of the conquerors. But what could a woman do? Excite the imagination, lead towards dangers which she could neither share nor control? Such an action would seem to me not only rash but criminal. All the same, when the Duc de Bassano came to tell me that it had been proposed to transfer the seat of the government to Blois, I warmly approved this measure. To me anything seemed better than to give oneself up unconditionally to the enemy, and from Blois, surrounded by faithful troops, it would at all events be possible to obtain certain concessions. But all these strong resolutions evaporated into empty words, and I heard nothing further about the matter.

General Exelmans, who was ready to take all risks in spite of the orders to be cautious, beat the Prussians near Versailles. In this engagement Colonel de Briquville, whom I had seen the day before, was seriously wounded. In spite of the pain he was in he wrote to me (as though I had any influence), telling me to reassure the people who were alarmed, and to do what I could to prevent Paris from capitulating. But the Prussians drew nearer. Mal

maison narrowly escaped pillage. It was thought that the Emperor was there. Young Monsieur de Brack, who was in command at the bridge of Neuilly, was obliged to charge several times in order to save the house we had so recently left. His courage and devotion saved the precious objects that I had left behind. I admired him enough to be glad to owe this obligation to him.

A capitulation, the terms of which were not fully executed, surrendered Paris to the Allies, and forced the army to withdraw towards the Loire. I was urged to go there, too. Monsieur de Brack escorted by his entire regiment came to offer to conduct me. But would it be right for me to follow an army? It was only from the Allied Sovereigns that I could hope to obtain the means of passing through their lines without difficulty in order to reach Switzerland, where I wished to live.

The English were masters of Paris. The army had left. Louis XVIII approached, and people still clung to the tricolour cockade. That great enthusiasm for the Royal cause which was to have become national, did not venture to express itself. People believed, or pretended to believe, that I and I alone stifled it, and consequently both the Royalists and the foreigners hated and feared me. Some excuse had to be found by which so many people's wounded vanity could explain the silence which greeted the return of the Bourbons.

The King was at Saint-Denis.* I was walking about my garden when I saw cabs go by filled with wild-looking men, who, when they recognized me, made threatening gestures and shouted insults. They seemed ready to jump out of their vehicles to attack me. Fouché warned me that though he was doing everything he could to protect me, everything was to be feared, and that I must take precautions as people were more actively hostile to me than ever. And so, on the day following the King's entry into Paris, some young members of his bodyguard, after having distinguished themselves by wrecking a café, set out towards my house, doubtless with the same intention. The police and the National Guard managed to disperse them, and without further hesitation I left my home and

* See Note p 274

hired another residence under an assumed name,* as I wished not to compromise any of my friends. During the interval between the landing of the Emperor and his arrival in Paris I had not felt the same scruple—confidence in his success had then allowed me to believe I should later on be able to reward a service, but now my presence could only do harm. I therefore shut myself up alone with my children and received no visitors until, the Prince of Schwarzenberg having established his military headquarters in my house, I felt that I could return to it in safety, convinced that I no longer had anything to fear from the Royalists, though their hatred of me still continued. If workmen in the suburbs made seditious remarks I was alleged to have paid them to do so. Red carnations were at that time my emblem. I was recognized going about on foot and alone in the most out-of-the-way corners of the town. In short, the cause that had been routed, whose supporters had been scattered, that lacked an army or support of any kind, still made the armed hosts of Europe tremble, and it was on a woman that the sovereigns who formed the Coalition fixed their eyes.

The army had re-assembled on the banks of the Loire. Monsieur de Flahaut was already there. Monsieur de Labédoyère called to say good-bye to me. He could not bear to be separated from his wife, who had been entirely won over to his ideas. When I expressed my astonishment that he was still in Paris he answered, "You are right. I must not allow myself to be captured. I should be condemned and then pardoned on account of my wife's family. I do not want favours from them. They're going to injure France, but all her defenders are not dead, and I wish to be with them and help to deliver her."

The Emperor of Russia returned to Paris.* The protection he had offered me in the past was more necessary now than it had ever been. To him alone I could look for protection, but although it would have been natural enough for me to turn to him, I felt too broken hearted by my country's misfortunes to consent to receive him as a friend so soon. Indeed, I hesitated whether I would receive him at all. My doubt did not last long. He

did not make the slightest enquiry about me, left me all alone in the midst of dangers, and seemed to wish to humiliate me. One day when he and his staff came to see the Prince of Schwarzenberg, he did not even come up to my apartment, where he had been so eager to call in the past. Far from being wounded by this disdain, I was vexed only on his account. Thus he whose attentions had at one time involved me in so many difficulties now left me undefended in misfortune. He pitilessly abandoned me to the attacks of those against whom he alone had the power to defend me. I felt sorry for him, and regretted that political considerations had so changed his generous feelings, but his conduct could not humiliate me. My rôle seemed the nobler of the two. In a very short time I had improved my knowledge of politics. I began to be able to discern the truth, to recognize when a cause was just. The grandeur and the misfortune of my own rendered it still dearer and more sacred to me, but though I held myself in dignified isolation, I could not but be hurt by certain phrases of a conversation which the young Polish woman, Madame Walewska, had with the Emperor of Russia, and which she repeated to me. She had asked him to take care of Madame Mère, to whom the Allies had not been considerate. "How can you expect that I shall trouble about that family again?" he said to her. "Look at Queen Hortense, whom I protected in 1814. Well! she is the cause of all the troubles which have befallen France." Did he really believe what he said? Or was it an excuse not to see me and to justify his hardness? Whatever may have been the cause of his accusation it revolted me. I, the cause of all our disasters! I, who had never done anything to harm a single Frenchman! Was it because I had been attentive to the Emperor during the last days he spent at Malmaison? I was proud of it, and who would dare to blame me for it? I made a packet of all the letters I had received from the Emperor of Russia, and, sending them back to him, I wrote that, since he had taught me to doubt the sentiments of friendship and esteem they contained, I no longer wished to keep the expression of them. He immediately dispatched Monsieur Boutiaquine with a rather

severe reply, speaking of the part I had played in politics, a rôle, he said, unworthy of a woman, and as proof he cited the note I had left with Monsieur Boutiaquine. He added that my praise of peace in my conversations with him had led him to suppose that I was hostile to the Emperor Napoleon.

He had mistaken my general distaste for grandeur for an indication of personal opposition towards the man who had conferred it on me. But his minister adopted a very different tone, speaking of the suspicions against me which had been sown and fostered in his master's mind, and of the high esteem in which he himself still held me. He added that the King of France had begged the Emperor of Russia on his knees not to see me. A strange idea! And I could not help smiling at the thought of a King of France on his knees imploring the Emperor of Russia not to go and see a woman. "The Emperor's ministers," continued Monsieur Boutiaquine, "and the princes who are his allies constantly reproach him for the protection he offered you and your family. He has not changed towards you, but the return of his letters wounded him deeply. Nevertheless, Your Majesty need not worry, everything will quiet down in a little while."—"All that I ask is permission to leave," I answered, "the only things I need are passports."—"But do you not owe it to the memory of his friendship which you have just offended, to send him a brief reply? And should not this reply be written in such a way that he can show it to his advisers?"—"Very well, then, I will write to the Emperor. I still value his esteem and wish him to know the truth. As for what his advisers or anybody else may think, that is quite indifferent to me."

As a matter of fact I did write a long letter, in which I gave some particulars of those causes for the discontent of the French, which were the only true reasons for the return of the Emperor Napoleon—a return to which no one had contributed. I denied the charge that I had done anything towards it myself. I admitted having made a mistake, that of remaining in France in 1814, and also that of forgetting the bitterness of the hatred which surrounded me. I corrected the impression that I was unhappy because I

had done my duty towards him who had been a father to me, and I ended by saying that I was about to withdraw and lead a secluded life far from the world and its injustices, and that it was he whom I pitied for being obliged to remain on one of those social pinnacles to which truth can never attain. I had another letter from him but it was very like the first. Only in it he, who had been the first to inform me of the King's ill-will towards me and to dissuade me from paying a visit of thanks, now wrote that, having been allowed by the King's kindness to remain in France, I ought not to have reappeared at the Court of the Emperor Napoleon. I felt that such illogical reasoning did not call for a reply and I made none.

My children still remained hidden in the house I had hired. I thought of nothing but how to get them to a place of safety. Such a place was only to be found abroad, and I did not know by what means to get them out of France. The idea of sending them to Switzerland alone with their nurse and a man-servant occurred to me. They might be passed off as the children of these servants. Monsieur Gabriel Delessert, who had a Swiss servant, managed to secure a passport bearing the name of this man and his wife. He sent it to me. But the Allied Sovereigns (afraid I knew not of what) decided that I must leave Paris immediately.* Monsieur Boutiaguine came in great alarm to tell me that men wearing red carnations were in the habit of assembling at night on the boulevard. I was accused of instigating this movement. Monsieur Decazes, at that time Préfet de Police, sent me an order forbidding me to remain any longer in Paris.* Monsieur Muffling, the Governor of Paris, appointed by the Allies, sent for Monsieur Devaux to inform him of the danger I was in, and of the fact that it would be necessary for me to have an armed escort as far as the gates.† He feared for my life and did not wish the odium of such a crime to fall on the Allies. All these police services wished me ill, but none wanted to kill me, the balance was rather difficult to maintain. I refused everything except one of Prince de Schwarzenberg's aides-de-camp to accompany me through the entire Austrian army. My passports for Berlin

* See Note p 274
Vol. II

were sent me bearing the signatures of all the French and foreign authorities. This encouraged me to have my children back with me, for thus protected I felt they were in less danger with me than they would have been elsewhere.

Just as I was entering my carriage I was informed that at a council held at the Pavillon de Flore orders had been issued about me similar to those given Monsieur de Maubreuil regarding the Queen of Westphalia in 1814. Members of the Royal Bodyguard were said to have left ahead of me with instructions to ambush me, and I was advised not to take any valuables with me.* Impressed by the similarity between the two orders, I trembled for the lives of those dearest to me. But what could I do? If, now that my children had again returned to my house, I sent them off alone, they would be in danger of being followed and kidnapped without having the protection which the presence of an Austrian officer offered me. Thus it was clear that they would still be safest beside their mother. The need of protecting them, the conviction that I could rely on no one but myself, had stimulated all my faculties and strung me up to a high degree of nervous tension. I seemed joyous rather than terrified, indifferent rather than deeply moved. My brain took command and I stifled the impulses of my heart which might have led me to give way to one of those moments of weakness which are so fatal in times of danger or calamity. All the members of my household assembled to bid me farewell. I received them as calmly as though I were to return the next day. I know that this was a surprise to them, but I dreaded emotion, and hastened to drive off accompanied by my children, abandoning myself bravely to the course of events whatever they might be.*

As we crossed the boulevards I noticed at intervals men on horseback. I heard afterwards—it was the Prussian governor of Paris who told it to Monsieur Devaux—that this was for my protection. But there was no sign of disorder as I passed. The first night I spent at Ixeroy in the house that Madame de Nicolay had placed at my disposal. The next morning I found myself suddenly in the midst of the enemies' troops. Another carriage was changing horses at the same time. An Englishman

* See Note p. 275.

not knowing who I was, said to me, "Madame, I have just been stopped by a French regiment of irregular troops. They robbed me. You have everything to fear."—"They certainly were not French," I replied promptly. "Such a thing is impossible." Hearing these remarks the aide-de-camp, who was in the second carriage with Monsieur de Marmol, suggested buying a pair of pistols and sitting beside the coachman of my carriage. He pointed out all the risks I was exposed to in the midst of these undisciplined troops. "As long as they are French, I have no reason to fear them," I replied. The idea that fighting might take place under my very eyes made me tremble, and seemed to me a thousand times more terrifying than the sight of regiments in disorder, which my name alone would have sufficed to recall to a sense of their duties. Hence, without letting the aide-de-camp know, I gave orders to my footman who ran beside my carriage to have it leave the posting-house as soon as it had been reharnessed, without waiting for the second coach, in which were seated Monsieur de Marmol and the Austrian officer. Thus I drove off first, unattended and with my two children. I preferred not to have a foreign officer with me at the spot where we were told we might encounter the irregular troops. Fortunately we met nothing but a few soldiers in distress, to whom I gave some money. I learned at the next posting station that the troops who had been made into such a bugbear were on their way to rejoin the army on the Loire, and that meeting with an Englishman they had thought him fair game, but all the harm they had done him was to make him pay a ransom of fifty louis to drink the health of the regiment. The peasants who told me of it all applauded what they considered a fair stratagem and laughed about it.

The third day of my journey (July 20th, 1815), as I was about to enter Dijon, a horseman stationed on the road and carrying a pistol came up and stopped my carriage. He was an Austrian outpost. The aide-de-camp gave his name and we proceeded on our way. As I was going up the stairs of the inn at Dijon I heard a woman looking out through a half-open door exclaim

she is." I paid no attention to this. The aide-de-camp, Comte Edouard de Woyna, presented the Austrian captain in command of the outpost to me. The captain offered me a military escort. This I declined, not wishing to have any special honours shown me. After Monsieur de Woyna had gone out to see the town, and while I was talking with the Austrian captain, three French officers entered my private drawing-room. They were pale and evidently profoundly impressed with the importance and danger of their mission, which was that of arresting a woman and her two children. "Madame," they said, "our orders are that you are not to leave this spot."—"Very well, gentlemen, then I will remain here," I replied quite coolly—"Who gives orders here, I should like to know?" exclaimed the Austrian officer, "I am in command. Madame is free to leave whenever she pleases." On hearing this answer, that of the person in authority uttered in a tone he was only too well entitled to use, the French officers withdrew. They tried to provoke a hostile demonstration against me outside the inn. My courage nearly failed me. Was it possible? Enemies taking my part, Frenchmen acting as my foes! For the pleasure of persecuting me they had placed themselves in a humiliating position and allowed themselves to be reminded that they had been defeated! This painful impression was soon banished by shouts of 'Long live the King,' which echoed under my windows. The crowd was composed of old men, children and many women of the best society of Dijon. Monsieur de Woyna, when he returned sent out a couple of Austrian soldiers to disperse the crowd. He did this, although I begged him not to, saying, 'I do not mind hearing these shouts. For once, at all events, no one will say that I paid for them.' I must say, moreover, that the working-classes seemed to sympathize with me and looked derisively at the fury of my enemies.

A young man named Monsieur de Nansouty, belonging to the Royal Bodyguard, had arrived at Dijon the day before. He was at the head of the movement. He did not leave the inn but marched up and down before it with a long sword which rattled as he walked, as though the

of the weapon conferred a more martial air on its owner and the noise indicated the awe he must inspire. His companions kept guard over my carriage and drank together in one of the parlours. Their remarks were often sinister. Consequently Monsieur de Woyna, Monsieur de Marmol and my servants were on the alert. The Austrian advance guard left the city, their places being taken by another detachment of the same troops. Immediately the young men hastened to the officer in command of the new detachment to inform him that, in accordance with orders issued by the Court of France, I was to be held as prisoner and that a Frenchman in disguise, since he was dressed as an Austrian, prevented them from carrying out these instructions. The commanding officer, much embarrassed, called at the inn. He turned out to be a personal friend of Monsieur de Woyna and embraced the latter instead of placing him under arrest. It was agreed that the Austrian troops should use force if necessary in order to insure my passage through the town. Monsieur de Nansouty cried out to Monsieur de Woyna, "I will send a despatch-rider to Paris. Your behaviour shall be known. You have prevented me from carrying out my orders! A woman who has done us so much harm! Shame on you for letting her go free! It's disgraceful!"

A notice declaring that I was a person who had brought misfortune on France was posted in all the streets*. My position became more critical every moment. Fortunately the French general, Liger-Belair, in command of the division, arrived during the night. Monsieur de Woyna lost no time in going to see him and explained his mission. The French general was himself very perplexed as to the wisest means of restraining such violent passions and of holding back men who seemed to have received positive instructions. He and Monsieur de Woyna, who was resolved to use the Austrian troops if necessary, arranged that a review should be held at the same time as my departure. In this way the Royalist officers and the members of the *Garde d'honneur* would be forced to give up their surveillance of my movements and return to their regular posts. Monsieur de Nansouty, member of the Royal Bodyguard, who had

* See Note p 275

just arrived from Paris and consequently had no staff appointment, and who doubtless was the person against whom I had been warned before leaving Paris, was the only one free to remain behind to witness my departure. He could not conceal his disappointment to see his prey thus escape him, and as I came downstairs, escorted by Monsieur de Woyna between a double row of Austrians, he again rushed after the Austrian aide-de-camp to reproach him for having prevented the Royalists from revenging themselves on me.

Four Austrians on horseback acted as my escort. The silent townspeople looked at me with an affectionate interest and on the door-step of more than one shop I saw several persons hold out their arms towards me affectionately. At Dôle there was a more ardent demonstration in my favour. A crowd surrounded my carriage, throwing me red carnations, and men and women wept as I passed. "Is it possible," exclaimed a man dressed as a peasant, "and isn't it shameful (*c'est y pas indévants*) that the good leave and the wicked remain!" Another came up beside my carriage and asked if I was a prisoner, if the Austrian officer was kind to me. I hastened to assure him that I was quite satisfied with the care that was being taken of me and that the presence of the officer was most useful to me. So at Dijon he had defended me and here I protected him!

Near Poligny I met a group of officers who had just surrendered a town. They came round my carriage and wept. Several proposed to accompany me but I refused and attempted to calm their emotion and show them the necessity of accepting the sad events that had occurred. "Yes we must submit," said a man in a waggoner's smock standing at the gate of a farm, "but our day will come, and then it will be the awakening of the lion."

At last I reached the frontier. I was about to leave the soil of France. Formerly, in the days of my prosperity I would have wept for the country I was leaving. Now that I had exile forced upon me I was almost relieved to go. In the bitterness of my grief I considered France ungrateful and unjust. She had insulted the man who had done so much for her, after having deserted him. &c.

repulsed those who loved her so dearly. I felt an atmosphere of hatred and of fury all about me. I felt that I should breathe more freely on a foreign soil. I was mistaken. I had to count with passions that never forget and never weary. They have haunted me everywhere. I soon learned that I did wrong to accuse my country : she suffered more than I ; she, too, was a victim of the fears and jealousies aroused by her years of glory. The hand of the enemy was felt everywhere, everywhere his clutch tightened. Having learned this I confess that I was glad to be able to complain only of foreigners and I became proud of having my share in the persecutions which afflicted a great nation without being able to subdue it.

CHAPTER XX

THE BANISHED QUEEN

(JULY 25TH, 1815—DECEMBER 7TH, 1815)

At Geneva—Madame Mère and Cardinal Fesch—The Duc and Duchesse de Bassano—Monsieur de Flahaut—The Austrians at Chambéry—Murat—The letters of Monsieur de Flahaut—Monsieur de Flahaut's reply—The Queen wishes to leave Aix—At Fréjus—Arrival at Constance.

I ARRIVED at Geneva and settled in the suburb of Sécheron, close to my little country house, which was not yet furnished. How glad I should have been to enjoy the rest that this quiet spot seemed to offer me! I already imagined myself installed there. I thought of how I would arrange the house inside and out. No hateful passions would dare enter. My lot would be completely calm, completely peaceful. Alas, this dream vanished swiftly. I could not take my mind off my cruel uncertainty as to the Emperor's fate or what was happening to the army of the Loire, that last hope of a defeated country. My imagination conjured up visions of the dangers which menaced those who were dear to me. Is not the egoist, so wrapped up in himself that he never thinks what may befall others, sometimes to be envied? A thousand phantoms do not disturb his peace of mind so long as he himself is safe.

And how well founded were my alarms! I learned what had befallen the Emperor. How grievous it was that he should have escaped the enemies who were leagued against him only to fall into the clutches of the most subtle of them all, and to think that Fortune had saved his life only to lead him into captivity! I read, too, on the list of those

who had been killed or exiled the names of several of my friends, and though my own name was not among them, my danger was almost as great as theirs. Although I had arrived at Geneva with passports signed by the Allied Powers and even by the King of France I was not allowed either to remain there or to go on. And, as it was impossible for me to go back, what was I to do? Monsieur de Woyna made representations to the local authorities at Geneva: speaking in the name of his sovereign, he declared that they were responsible for my safety and that I must be allowed to wait there at least until he had received an answer from Paris. He came to see me to explain this new complication. I received the news with an apparent calm which surprised him so much that he said to Monsieur de Marmol that French women did not take anything seriously. My life was in danger: he did not know what steps to take to safeguard it, but I was still ready to smile. When I heard that he was vexed I sent for him again, thanked him for all he had done for me and advised him to learn to judge French women more leniently and not mistake resignation for thoughtlessness or frivolity.

Cardinal Fesch and his sister, the Emperor's mother, arrived at Geneva. Their passports were for Italy. The local authorities forced Madame Mère to continue her journey in spite of her advanced age and her misfortunes. But trouble had not broken her spirit, for she said to an Austrian aide-de-camp who accompanied her, "Well, Monsieur, in spite of the rancour of the Allies against the Emperor Napoleon, I am prouder to be his mother than I should have been to be the mother of your Emperor, the Emperor of Russia and all the kings in the world!" I showered on her every sign of tender affection, and the memory of what I had been able to do for the Emperor at Malmaison had, I believe, reconciled her to me. From that day she never forgot that I was one of her children. But I did not even have the satisfaction of being able to help her by accompanying her on her journey. My fate remained in suspense at the mercy of anyone who wished to injure me.

An officer who had been ill-treated and robbed by the enemy's soldiers came to me in a state of utter destitu-

tion He was flying from the death to which his name, included in the first list of those who were to be shot, condemned him Giving way to despair, he was about to go back to France and give himself up It was General Ameil As I knew that I was under observation I feared lest he might be arrested if he stayed with me, and remembering the passport bearing a Swiss name, which I had intended to use for my children, I gave it to him with all necessary assistance. I saved his life, and was so pleased about it that for a time I forgot the hardship of my own situation

I also received the visit of the Duc and Duchesse de Bassano She, so sensitive and tender, could not bear the idea of seeing me thus abandoned by all, alone with my children and almost a prisoner of the Swiss Government. She forgot her own fate in pitying mine. At last, in response to the urgent request of Monsieur Auguste de Talleyrand, the French ambassador, the Swiss Diet repeated the order compelling me to leave Swiss territory in spite of passports signed by the ambassador's sovereign Mademoiselle Cochelet, whom I had left in Paris for a few days to give her time to attend to her private affairs, now joined me, with the Abbé Bertrand She had left her family and her country in order to devote herself to me, and was the only one of my attendants left to me, for I could not dream of taking any of my ladies-in-waiting with me, all were too attached to France by bonds of wealth, social position or family ties

Driven out of Switzerland, I did not know in what direction I should be allowed to turn my steps Monsieur de Woyna, who did not know what advice to give me, proposed to escort me back to France, and leave me at Bourg until he had been able to take further instructions in Paris In this dilemma I decided to go to the baths of Aix and wait there till my fate should be decided

I should have liked before leaving to see Madame de Staël, who was living not far away I knew that she had said of the Emperor, 'I cannot understand the conduct of this man whom I had considered great He abandons his army and runs away What a pitiful ending!'



*Water colour by
Queen Hortense*

*Belonging to
Prince Napoleon*

PRINCE NAPOLEON-LOUIS



*Water colour by
Queen Hortense*

*Belonging to
Prince Napoleon*

PRINCE LOUIS-NAPOLÉON

Perhaps a few moments' conversation would have sufficed to convince her that he had never been greater than when fortune failed him ; but my present position made it impossible for me to make any advances towards her with dignity. Moreover, what can the best brain in the world do when passion is the judge ! Then, too, I said to myself that Napoleon could well dispense with the approval of Madame de Stael.

I had chosen Aix with the idea that I might be remembered there. The loss of my friend had made the place dear and sacred to me. It would awake sad recollections, but I did not shun melancholy. I had founded a hospital there, I had relieved the poor, and this wins more gratitude than benefits conferred on the rich. I realized this by the way the townspeople welcomed me. Once more I found myself on a friendly soil.*

Monsieur de Woyna left me to return to Paris and inquire what the Powers had decided in regard to my future. Monsieur Appel, aide-de-camp to the Prince of Schwarzenberg, who had travelled with my other carriages, remained with me.

This young Comte de Woyna had a remarkably handsome face and ready wit. Monsieur de Metternich had trained him to diplomacy, and he had the greatest natural gifts for the career. He studied every part, but, too young at twenty to know how to conceal his feelings, his vanity led him to show off the great ability by which he hoped to make his fortune. The choice of such an escort for me was a sufficient indication of the Austrian policy. Indeed Monsieur de Metternich had already said in Paris, "The young man who accompanies Queen Hortense is cut out for the hero of a novel." But even if his pupil were the hero of a novel, should he have forgotten that I was not that type of heroine ? Perhaps the Powers considered this might afford a good means of luring me into Austria : this idea has occurred to me since, but as I have no proof I may be wrong. "Madame," said Monsieur de Woyna, as he was taking leave of me, "I see how completely mistaken the general opinion of you is. People are far from supposing you to be so resigned and so wonderfully gentle

* See Note p 275

as I have seen you. The better to serve you in Paris, I will not say what I think of you. People would think me bewitched. You can trust me. I will wind up your affairs and I will come back to conduct you wherever you wish to retire." As a matter of fact, I heard some time afterwards that he was taking my part with much zeal and in a way which amused me greatly. He told everybody that I was incapable of having done anything that I was accused of, as I was not nearly clever enough. I considered this expedient excellent and was grateful to him for it.

The Piedmontese troops were occupying Savoy. The day after my arrival at Aix a Piedmontese officer, of rather coarse looks appeared at my house with orders not to let me out of his sight. He insisted on observing these instructions with such surly obstinacy that Monsieur Appel lost his temper and was on the point of asking for an explanation of his conduct, but thought it wiser to refer to the officer in command at Chambéry, on whom he called, explaining that so long as I was under his protection he would not tolerate such treatment. The Piedmontese commander was profuse in his apologies, threw all the blame on his subordinate, and at once recalled him.

One evening, to my intense surprise, whom should I see enter my drawing-room but Monsieur de Flahaut! The army of the Loire had capitulated and been disbanded by Marshal Macdonald. Monsieur de Labédoyère, yielding to his longing to see his wife again, had risked a journey to Paris, where he had not escaped the snares that the police had set for him this long time. He was arrested. Monsieur Lavallette, who could not believe himself guilty of a crime, unless it were one which all France had committed at the same time, had refused to leave his wife, who was about to have a child. He had been thrown into prison. Monsieur de Flahaut had left his cousin Labédoyère on arriving in Paris, and he came to Aix to join me and to devote his life to me. I said to him that my position might compromise him, just as his presence would injure my reputation, and that therefore he must withdraw until the time when, more firmly established, I could again surround

myself with my friends. He felt the necessity for this sacrifice and took up his residence near enough to keep in touch with me. Although this was scarcely a separation, a strange foreboding made it more painful than any which had preceded it and my heart was very sore at our parting. A few days later the newspapers announced this journey of Monsieur de Flahaut, and political circles used it as an example of the way in which I was surrounded by a large number of officers from the army of the Loire, attracted by the prominence of my position. As a matter of fact, my formidable staff was composed of Monsieur de Marmol, of a weak constitution, and the Abbé Bertrand, whose cloth and temperament were not of a martial character.

The troops at Lyons were commanded by the Austrian General Roxhmans. He sent me a letter by one of his aides-de-camp saying that he placed himself at my service so long as I remained under his government, and that he felt himself responsible for my safety. His real purpose, however, was to warn the Austrian aide-de-camp, Monsieur Appel, that emissaries from Paris threatened my life and the lives of my children. The general's aide-de-camp recommended Monsieur Appel to redouble his vigilance. As I had every reason to believe that General Roxhman's information was correct, and as the events that were taking place throughout Southern France justified his alarm, it would have been natural for me to be terrified at the news of this danger. But I could not believe in the existence of a plot against me, and, in spite of the incident at Dijon, I could not think that my enemies would plan the murder of a woman and her two little children. And so I remained perfectly calm.

This calm was destroyed by terrible news ! Monsieur de Labédoyère had been shot. Another friend lost to us ! Not a single voice had been raised to save him. In the past we had not thus abandoned Rivière or Polignac ; and Labédoyère, at all events, had never tried to assassinate anyone as they had. Unfortunate young man ! How high his ideals had been ! How ardent his patriotism ! How noble his devotion to his country ! How unselfish in his affections ! By his death France lost one of her

best citizens and I a friend I reproached myself for having scarcely responded to his generous feeling for me. Had he not at least deserved my confidence? Well founded self-reproaches mingled with my regrets.

About the same time I heard of the tragic death of Murat*. What an end for a king! What an example for the masses! Everything looked sinister around me, and my frequent visits to my sisters of charity alone raised my drooping spirits. I asked their prayers for those who remained to me and I had the consoling thought that they were so pure that their petitions must surely be granted.

Since Monsieur de Flahaut's departure several letters addressed to him had come back from the army of the Loire. To forward them to him at Lyons, whither he had withdrawn, might be prejudicial to him. On the other hand they might contain important news. I enjoyed his confidence and believed that I could open them without indiscretion. Good God! What a shock it was to read the passionate declarations of a woman who appeared to have claims on his affection, and who plumed herself on the possession of his love! In an instant all other grief disappeared. Country, friends, fears, dangers, all gave place to one idea. I had been deceived! And by whom, and at what a moment! How could I resist this supreme trial? My first impulse was to send him an eternal farewell, my second to remember that he, too, was unhappy. Perhaps he was deserted, abandoned by one who had only cared for his brilliant career. Should I, the friend in misfortune, desert him, too? Would he not be reduced to despair, and by me? Besides, had I not asked too much perfection from a man, and, if he really loved another, if I stood in the way of his perfect happiness, were not these sufficient reasons to forgive him? But I kept repeating to myself. Why did he deceive me? A man does not know how truly a pure heart may love him. God seems to have formed souls so tender and so loving for Himself alone, and when they turn from the Divine Love which fills their imagination and seek satisfaction elsewhere they only find restlessness, suffering and disappointment.

After having given way for long to all the violent emotions

of my heart and all the disordered fancies of my mind, I gathered up what little strength was left me and wrote to Monsieur de Flahaut. In this letter I alternately accused and pitied him, and I ended by expressing the hope that he would return to the woman whose love must be indeed precious to him since he had sacrificed such an affection as mine to it. I promised to remain his friend in spite of all, on one condition : he must tell me the whole truth. After the effort necessary to write this letter I sank into a state of complete exhaustion. The courage which had not failed under material misfortunes now gave way. I had been smitten in the heart, and that was where I was most sensitive. I could not touch food without fainting. I was carried up to the mountains, and there I would remain for five hours at a time without saying a word.

I was soon roused from this death-like condition by the arrival of Monsieur Briatte, my husband's agent. A chamberlain accompanied him, and both came in Louis's name to take my elder son away from me. My cup was now full. My last, my dearest consolation was about to be snatched from me, and at what a moment ! Well ! The son for whom I had so striven in a court of law, the son from whom I had thought it impossible that I could ever tear myself. O perfect love that is a mother's ! I freely gave him up despite the breaking of my heart. Alas ! Could I resist now that I had nothing but misfortune to offer him ? And so he went. All these blows falling upon me at once crushed my moral courage. I left the settlement of my position to anyone who would see to it : all was utterly indifferent to me. I felt my life and my strength ebb away day by day, little by little, whilst the newspapers and political pamphlets described my ceaseless activities. I was surprised to exist so much in other minds when I existed so little in my own.

I received Monsieur de Flahaut's answer. His despair terrified me. He regretted that he had not found death with so many brave comrades at Waterloo. In spite of every danger, he wished to give me a personal explanation and obtain my forgiveness. I expressly forbade him to do so. His grief moved my pity. He swore the most

touching way that his heart had never ceased to be mine, but that could not satisfy me. I should have believed him, I should have pitied him, I should still have loved him, if he had had the courage to admit "I love someone else." There would have been peace in this admission whereas all these renewed vows of tenderness and devotion stirred so many conflicting feelings that my pain was increased. It was in vain that the thought of his despair pleaded for him. The charm was broken. He had deceived me. I could forgive, but not forget. I thank my fate that since my life was still necessary to my children, I should have happened to be at Aix-les-Bains, for the hot baths relaxed the tension of my nerves and saved my life. Then, too, the care that the health of my younger son required reminded me of duties that I seemed to neglect. He was naturally delicate and was upset by the grief of parting from his brother*. I vowed that I would live, for I was a mother and no one can take a mother's place. But to live one must have strength. I did not lose courage and sought for it everywhere. Often I went to see my Sisters of Charity and my hospital. One day a woman was brought in who was extremely ill. It was impossible to open the windows of her room. Suffocated by the odour, I stopped in the doorway, not without blushing, since the good Sisters did not leave her bedside. I made an effort to conquer my extreme repulsion and surmounting it remained by the sick-bed a suitable time. This simple incident taught me in a few minutes where real merit and real courage are to be found here below. I compared myself to these pious women and discovered my own unworthiness. What right had I to pity myself so constantly? Did I deserve happiness when so very few possess it? If I had thought myself better than others was I not puffed up with pride? Heaven had given me a feeling heart that I might love my fellows and a high rank that I might help them. What use had I made of these gifts? I had distributed money, but that was no merit because I was well off, I had protected those who were in adversity, but thanks were due to those who had called my attention to their necessities. Had I sought out the

unfortunate? True, I had never refused to help anyone in need; but had I gone forth to meet them? No, I awaited the request instead of forestalling it. My kindness had been passive, and what right had I, so imperfect, to exact perfection from others? Absorbed by an unhappy passion, which was only increased by my attempts to conquer it, I lived only for one man. I was punished as I deserved. Friends, relatives, all who have been dependent on me or who have shown an interest in me, you all have a right to complain, to think me ungrateful and to reprove me. Then, as though these soft reproaches had awakened me from a long sleep, I sent a keepsake to some, and to others a long, affectionate letter. I wanted to love everyone so as no longer to love one person too much. But the succour that I sought most perseveringly was to absorb the principles of religion which teach us so well how to be happy by seeking only the happiness of others and by confiding our fate to God. "No, no," I repeated, as I hugged my son in my arms, "I will not let myself die. I can still be of use!" When we are quite steeped in sorrow it seems almost as though we delighted in it. We repulse every thought that might make life dear to us. In these heart-breaking moments I had almost forgotten that I still had a brother, when, while I was wondering what would become of me, I received a testimony of his tender anxiety about me. He had not known where to address me and had sent a letter to an acquaintance who lived near Aix asking for my news. This mark of sympathy revived my courage.

Monsieur de Flahaut sent me a detailed account of his life. He said that his attachment to me sufficed to fill it, but that he had been afraid of my standard of perfection. My heart was too pure to understand the frailty of his, and when he had been guilty of a momentary weakness the fear of losing my esteem had prevented him from confessing it. A woman who guessed this sentiment had retained her hold over him by the threat, repeated a thousand times, of informing me of their liaison. But when he had come to offer to devote his life to me, had he the manner of a man who regretted anything? Was I not the one and only interest of his life? I loved him too dearly, I had to

much need of a consoling thought not to believe him, and once again I, who had so short time before sworn never to believe in his affection, let myself be ensnared.

As can readily be imagined, all these intimate griefs left very little place for political preoccupations. But in the long run I was obliged to think of them and to rouse myself from my lethargy. Every day my situation grew more critical. The Austrians were withdrawing their troops from Savoy, and I was about to find myself at the mercy of the French or Piedmontese Government. My son and some other children of his age had amused themselves by playing at soldiers in the courtyard with toy drums and sticks. This was enough to start a report that his mother was raising regiments. Fouché, as became a capable, well-informed minister, appreciated such gossip at its true value, but it was blindly accepted by his inexperienced successors, Monsieur de Richelieu and Monsieur Decazes, and the persecutions against me burst out again more violently than ever, an inevitable result of the credulous zeal of the novice, who can be made to believe all sorts of absurdities and who excuses the wrongs he inflicts by appeals to justice and retaliation. I have never been able to find out why the Comte de Woyra, who (so I was told daily) was to bring me back my passports, wrote to Monsieur Appel to return to Paris immediately and not have anything more to do with me in any way. I thus remained alone, without help or counsel, in the midst of all those perils from which I had been protected so far but which could only increase as time went on. True, I sent Monsieur de Marmol to ask permission for me to cross Switzerland, but he was not allowed to go further than Geneva, and my horses, which I had left at my country place at Prégny, had been sent away. It was evident that I must not dream of living in Switzerland, but I spent my days reading descriptions of all the beautiful sites, as though I were free to choose among them. To compensate all that I had lost I only asked to have some lovely landscape before my eyes, but political reasons frustrated the fulfilment of this dream, and seemed, in truth, to forbid my living anywhere.

Indeed, where would not my presence alarm someone? Could I stay on the territory of one of the great Powers? I suspected them all. In Holland? I had reigned there. In Italy? My brother had been Viceroy there. In Bavaria? I should have feared lest my presence should add to his difficulties. If some spot attracted me particularly I was quickly forced to give up the idea of going there. My uncertainty increased the home-sickness of my companions, who could not realize that I was no longer mistress of my own movements. In spite of all the obstacles that stood in the way, they persuaded me to keep my place at Prégny, pointing out the advantage of its proximity to France and to my friends, of the same customs and the same language as in France. Alas! I could have wished for nothing more! But could I? I often wore myself out with trying to make them understand the strangeness of my position. I was most anxious to convince them, for though good fortune can do without explanation, misfortune needs it. I said to them over and over again, "The only place in which we can be happy is France, but we shall not be left in peace so long as we remain here." And I was right. The allied sovereigns separated without taking any thought for me. I received letters about my stay at Aix which alarmed me. My friends advised me not to remain there another day. The excesses which were being committed throughout Southern France might easily extend to Savoy, and my last defence, the Austrians, withdrew at this time, handing over Aix to the Piedmontese. General Roxhmans, whose conduct had shown that he kept a necessary and benevolent watch over me, no longer commanded this territory. But what could I do since Geneva would not let me set foot on its territory? At last I wrote direct to the Swiss Diet to ask permission to cross their country and to proceed to Constance. The Grand Duke of Baden was a relative of mine, he had always behaved in a friendly manner towards me. Surely he would not refuse me an asylum. I was much hurt by the absolute forgetfulness of the Emperor of Russia. That his policy should prevent his offering me any support I could admit, but should this prevent

distant sign of interest in the dangerous position in which I was placed and of which he must surely have been aware? At last, however, he showed himself a little less hard, and bought a portion of the picture gallery at Malmaison, which the Allies wished to seize. Doubtless it was to please my brother rather than out of regard for me, but it was through the influence of the Russian envoy, Comte Capo d'Istria, that I received the passports authorizing me to proceed to Constance at the same time that the answer from the Diet gave me permission to cross Switzerland. Thus once more it was to the Emperor of Russia that I was indebted for some slight favours, but so many things had disenchanted me about him that I could not remember that he had once been my friend.

After four months of anxiety, uncertainty and danger, on November 28th, 1815, I left Aix, where my heart had been so cruelly torn—Aix, associated in my mind with the death of my beloved friend, Adèle, and with so many lost illusions. To avoid spending the night at an inn I went to my country place at Prégny, which was on the border line between France and Switzerland. About four o'clock in the morning my servants were arrested, and my house surrounded by fifty armed men. It was believed that I was smuggling Imperial generals in disguise out of the country. The gendarmes made a thorough search all over the house except in my room, which they did not venture to enter in spite of the strictness of their orders. I obliged them to do so, saying, "Come in, gentlemen, do not be afraid of offending me. I am leaving France for ever, and am glad to see French officers once more." They were evidently distressed and withdrew at once. The Sous-Préfet sent me an order from Monsieur Decazes written in such unseemly terms that I smiled contemptuously. He forbade me absolutely to set foot on French soil, and held the local authorities responsible for my obedience to this order! What deeds of daring had I done to make my presence so terrifying? I left while the cannon at Geneva were saluting the arrival of the Prince de Metternich. I passed through the canton of Vaux without any incident. At Payerne, just as I was

about to have supper, I was told that a Frenchman wished to speak to me, and I beheld General Ameil : " What imprudence ! " I exclaimed. " May not this be a great danger to you ? "—" Madame, I owe you my life. I heard you were passing through the district. How could I resist my desire of expressing my gratitude ? " And then he told me how, with the passport I had given him, he had successfully evaded the search that had been made for him, until one night having stopped in an inn in the canton of Valois the inn-keeper had asked him to share his room with another traveller whose carriage had broken down. He consented, and who should come in but that same Monsieur de Blacas, to whose house he had been taken on March 19th, accused of having intended to go over to the Emperor. But for the events of the 20th he would have been shot, so he took only time to dress and hid himself in the mountains. Later, former Royalist refugees, who had tasted misfortune, had sheltered him in a little isolated château, had kept his secret, and had given him a post as tutor to their children. His imprudence in coming to greet me proved fatal to him, for, having been observed by several of the men who dogged my steps, he was obliged to leave his hiding-place for fear of being handed over to France. He wrote to me at that time, and my brother and I sent him money to enable him to rejoin his wife and sail for the United States. He was captured in Hanover and thrown into prison, where, I am told, he lost his mind. I have noticed that during political troubles men usually show less moral courage than women. They are more easily disconcerted and depressed. The reason is simple enough : a man's mainspring is ambition ; it is natural that he should be discouraged if he sees his goal escape him, for that is his most poignant grief. A woman, on the contrary, is all affection, and breaks down only when her heart is wounded ; so she is more courageous about things which do not touch her so much.

My next night, after Payerne, was to be passed at Berne. I left my carriage at the entrance of the little town of Morat. In spite of the cold I was absorbed in making

a sketch of this snow-covered landscape when I beheld several armed men, who, after watching me for some time, came up and told me that they had instructions to arrest me and confine me to the inn. I was not startled. Nothing could surprise me any longer. I merely said that in times past this battlefield of Morat had witnessed an enterprise more glorious for the Swiss.¹ The only inconvenience this arrest caused me was to compel me to wait in a wretched tavern in the bitter cold till Monsieur de Marmol could obtain an explanation of this order. He was obliged to return twice to Fribourg, where the Council, composed of the high dignitaries of the Canton, took two days to make up their minds what to do. They gave an excuse that it was necessary for them to teach the National Committee a lesson in manners, because the Committee had not announced officially that I was passing through the Canton of Fribourg, on whose territory I had but a few steps to make. The real reason was to make a parade of the authority they could exercise with impunity on a dethroned queen and thus revenge themselves for their long submersion to the power of her family.

I reached Berne at last, and Monsieur de Krüdener, the Russian Ambassador, showed me the greatest consideration. He had for a long time been attached to the Russian embassy in Paris, and remembered how cordially I had received him. It was doubtless thanks to him that I was able to leave the town, so intense was the hatred of the name I bore. The landemann (mayor) himself, Monsieur de Watteville, forgetting all my mother's kindness to his son and his wife when they were in Paris, was uncouth enough to send a police official, one of his cousins, to see me. This official made inquiries about the individual who had dined with me at the inn of Payerne. I told him that he was a stranger to me, and that I should answer no more questions about him. My servants were arrested and obliged to describe the appearance of poor General Ameil, whom fortunately they had only seen on this one occasion, and of whom they intentionally gave an entirely

¹ An allusion to the famous Swiss victory over Charles the Bold, June 22nd, 1476.

false description. I left this canton under the escort of a colonel of the constabulary and followed by all the spies of the region. It was both amusing and absurd to see all the precautions and fears provoked by the arrival of a poor, suffering woman and a child of seven. Men seemed to me so utterly bereft of their senses that sometimes I was moved to a compassionate smile and sometimes to a feeling of pride. "So I have a sort of merit," I said to myself. "I have held the highest rank. I have encountered many people betrayed by Fortune, and as I have always felt for them and done what I could to relieve them and avoid humiliating them, I supposed that everyone would do the same. I see that I was mistaken and that I had a certain merit!" This idea satisfied me enough to make me accept with serenity the vexations which were inflicted on me. Monsieur de Krüdener again made me realize how indifferent I had become to the Emperor of Russia, who, on his journey through Switzerland, did not even trouble to ask his ambassador about me, although he knew that I was in that country. Yet I could not believe that in other days he had been insincere. People must have been mistaken in saying that he simply deferred to public opinion in being so kind to me in 1814 and so unkind in 1815. I prefer to explain the change by the suspiciousness of his character, and the intrigues that were set to work to foster his natural bent.

After a journey whose fatigues had been increased by the intense cold and the incessant vexations I was exposed to, I reached Constance, a frontier town belonging to the Grand Duchy of Baden.* The sight of its gloomy houses, the deserted aspect of its streets, the quiet which seemed to envelop it made me regard it as a lost corner of the world. Such silence after so much agitation, such isolation after so many passions let loose against me, pleased me and held out the promise of that rest which seemed so constantly to flee before me. But a chamberlain of the Court of Baden was sent to inform me that the treaties forbade any member of the imperial family to live elsewhere than on the territory of one of the four great Powers. Once again, where was I to go? My courage

* See Note p 276.

in supporting the vicissitudes of fate surprised everyone, but I deserved no praise. Helpless where my heart was concerned, I had received wounds there that would never heal, but the caprices of fortune could never daunt me. We raise ourselves above worldly grandeur when we lose it without emotion, and are proud at finding that we possess the noble quality that enables us to despise it, even the very hatred which tries to crush us, helps us to bear its injustices through their exaggeration.

CHAPTER XXI

A GREAT RENUNCIATION

(DECEMBER 7TH, 1815—APRIL, 1817)

The Bourbons—Spies—The French Exiles—Madame de Krüdener—Visit from Eugène—Monsieur de Metternich—Monsieur de Flahaut in England—The little Prince—Louis demands the dissolution of his marriage—Monsieur de Flahaut again—Pilgrimage to Einsiedeln—A confession and an absolution—Break with Flahaut—Purchase of Arenenberg—Hospitable Bavaria—Purchase of a house at Augsburg

PASSPORTS from the minister of Russia, which stated in the name of the Allies that I was to be allowed to remain in Constance, reassured my hosts and I was allowed to stay there, at least provisionally. Thus I was not obliged to expose my failing health again to all the dangers of a rigorous winter and I settled into a little house on the shores of the lake.

Persecution sought me out there under so many forms, that, really, I did not know which of the different governments bore me the most ill will. As can easily be imagined, the ministers of France distinguished themselves; they were not likely to lose such an opportunity of proving their devotion to their new master, least of all those who, like Monsieur Auguste de Talleyrand, had served the Emperor. Nevertheless, I doubt if there was any personal animosity on the part of Louis XVIII : he said one day to the Duc d'Otrante, " People say all sorts of things against her. I do not believe them. Let her go to Switzerland for a time. Everything will be forgotten and then she can come back." I was not inclined to take advantage of this favour, however. I remembered too acutely all that my sojourn in Paris had cost me and,

in a certain sense, I enjoyed being really in exile. At least now there could be nothing equivocal about my position.

It was just after my arrival at Constance that I heard of the execution of Marshal Ney,* which taught me that not even military glory could bring forgiveness in these days. In vain had his wife moved heaven and earth to save him. He was bound to die since his valour could not absolve him. But how was it that Monsieur Lavallette, so calm, so highly esteemed by everyone, and guilty, even in the eyes of a certain party, only of an unalterable devotion to the Emperor, was not saved if only as a matter of good policy? When I read how he had escaped only through his wife's devotion, I trembled lest he might be recaptured, for in that case it was useless to count on the mercy I had always believed must exist.

Personally, I was surrounded by espionage of every kind. Very often, the artifice of pretended misfortune was tried to win my confidence. I always listened to every woe, and at the risk of being their dupe I went so far as to try and soothe those who mingled exaggerated complaints with their requests. None the less I remained a most dangerous character in the eyes of all the governments. And as there was really nothing whatever against me, a thousand strange and absurd stories were invented. Sometimes I had been seen disguised in Paris or in some other part of France, sometimes I wrote letters to discharged officers, or received envoys from the Emperor's adherents. The more these tales were devoid of foundation the more dangerous and skilful I was thought to be. Sometimes I was reminded of that harrowing time when my husband conjured up phantoms which entirely upset both his life and my own. I found exactly the same eccentricities reproduced in these governments. They laid the same snares for me as my husband had done and, as in his case, I opposed only the uprightness of my conduct and the purity of my intentions.

Among the French exiles whom I saw arrive at Constance there were many former members of the Revolutionary assembly, now almost all grown old and feeble. Pitilessly banished from Switzerland, they came to spend their last

days by my side.* One poor woman who was suffering from inflammation of the lungs could not obtain permission to stop at Berne, and died an hour after she reached Constance. Such extraordinary severity might easily make weak-minded people believe that Madame de Krüdener* had really been inspired when she exclaimed: "Those who follow the Emperor Napoleon's cause will be persecuted and tracked down. They will not have a shelter for their heads."

Well, I am now going to explain Madame de Krüdener's character as I divined it, and set down what I have since learned about her. After having listened to her for a little while it was easy to see that her kindness of heart had drawn her to religion, and that her imagination led her astray. All inspirations seemed to her to come from the Divinity, and as she had none that were not kind and good, her doctrine was harmless so far as she was concerned, but other people might persuade themselves that the promptings of evil passions were a sacred command. The ladies in attendance on the Empress of Russia saw Madame de Krüdener frequently at Baden in 1814, and doubtless she predicted the same things to them as she did to me. The Emperor of Russia heard about her, and when he passed through the Grand Duchy of Baden with his troops he was very anxious to see her. A little superstition is always mingled with our fears and our hopes. In times of stress men feel the need of looking into the future and fortifying themselves with supernatural portents. Alexander, pious by nature, was prone to be led astray in such matters. Not knowing where to find Madame de Krüdener, he was on his knees in prayer, beseeching God to bring her to him when there was a knock at the door and a letter was brought him from the very person whose advice he considered so supremely important. Anyone would be impressed by such a coincidence. Madame de Krüdener wrote to him on behalf of some people who were in distress. The Emperor sent for her and she remained near him while he was in Paris, and during his stay there he went to see her alone every evening. He prayed with her and would not give any help to those whose misfortunes he considered due to the

* See Note p. 276.

wrath of God, and thus, in the name of divine love, he failed in that love of our neighbour that only a wilful blindness can separate from it, while she, who thought only of eternal welfare, went about in the prisons consoling the condemned, weeping for them and encouraging them to prayer. She saw Labédoyère, but she thought it impossible to save the lives of those whom God had condemned to die.

It must be admitted that the Emperor Napoleon did not quite fill the rôle her imagination had assigned to him. For a long time past she had been convinced that he was the Antichrist whose coming the prophets had predicted and before whom the nations of the world would bow down. But as she did not see Napoleon take the place of the Divinity she felt he had not completed his career, and she kept saying, "He will come back," and strove incessantly to rescue humanity from what she called its perdition. To avoid this the Holy Alliance was created. The idea was hers. She was all religion, and policy laid hands on her to work out its deep designs. Thus does a human weakness prepare great events.

As may readily be imagined, I did not obtain all these particulars from Madame de Krüdener herself. One day I said to her laughingly, "The Emperor of Russia is the man who has something of the Antichrist. Has he not all the charm, the winning manner and power of seduction one associates with that personage, whereas the greatness of the Emperor Napoleon, even when a prisoner, subjugates through admiration and a sort of awestruck respect which exclude any more tender feeling?" Madame de Krüdener did not admit of joking on such a subject and always put an end to it by saying, "If he is the man destined for the calamity of nations, it is not his fault, and we should pray for him." I have never known a woman who inspired a more lively affection by her kindness nor more fear by her madness, nor more madness by the eloquence of her persuasion. She became more and more excitable and gave herself up to a sort of mania for prophecy, when she was persecuted and driven from place to place till at last she found refuge in Russia.

Some time after my arrival at Constance, I had the joy of embracing my brother. He had left his family at Munich and came to pay me a visit. How many things I had to tell him and how much suffering a moment's happiness can obliterate ! Once more I felt that I was not alone on earth and that there was someone who still loved me sincerely ! Eugène listened without surprise to my account of all the tribulations I had experienced, and told me of the hatred which the word Frenchman excited all over Europe, and of which he, too, had felt something, although he had taken no part in recent events. He did not conceal the fact that several libellous pamphlets about me were being circulated in Germany. He was very sore about it for, though he did not for an instant distrust his sister, he bemoaned the many charges brought against her. As for him, he, at least, had come unsoiled through the struggle and had obtained the appreciation he deserved. Brave, loyal, frank, generous, incapable of betraying his word, preferring honour to position, a dignified retreat to ill-earned power, and the performance of his duty to any pleasures, his temper was lively, indulgent, even and gentle. Easy-going as regards the little things of life but very firm on those that were important, his mind was solid rather than brilliant, his feelings deep rather than expansive, and his judgment clear and far-sighted. As he had always served a man who was jealous of his own power, my brother had acquired the habit of effacing himself, keeping in the background, and in the world the only talents appreciated are those which glitter. In short, I had just bidden farewell to a great man and now found myself in the company of a good one.

Eugène told me that Monsieur Lavallette was in hiding near the place where he lived and that this was with the permission of the King of Bavaria. It was agreed that in the Spring I should go to him and see his little children, whom he was longing to show me. When he left I found myself once more alone, and, will it be believed ? surrounded by more pitfalls than ever. { At that time a brother's visit to his sister did not seem natural and aroused all sorts of conjectures. Never did men show so much cowardice and pettiness as at this period.

One day I received a letter from Monsieur de Metternich containing an Austrian passport. He invited me, on behalf of the Emperor of Austria, to come and live in that country, where I should be treated with all the respect due to my rank. Doubtless, the Emperor was the sovereign to whom it was most logical that I should look for assistance. My children were cousins of his grandson, but did he still remember this fact? Had he not given me sufficient reasons to distrust him? I decided to decline for the time being, and added that both at Constance and in his own territories I hoped to be always able to count on him for protection. I admit that I preferred a dangerous liberty to the protection offered by a prison. Then, too, my solitary retreat was not without charms for me. The scenery was magnificent. Not far from the town was a little wood called Lorette, where I walked every morning. The lofty snow-covered mountains reflected in the lake gave a grand and imposing beauty to the scene, while close at hand the leaves began to bud, the violets appeared and nature grew lovelier every day. My chief concern was to watch the progress of Spring, just as my only pleasure was to gather the flowers it gives us, and my occupation to compose melancholy airs. I did this easily. Not even the chatter of a drawing-room disturbed me. I wrote "*Partant pour la Syrie*" at Malmaison while my mother played backgammon. The song proved popular and was sung during the war of 1809, as "*La Sentinelle*" had been during the Spanish campaign. After that, each time the armies took the field I would be asked to write a song which I did reluctantly, for I did not like to be considered a composer, too lofty a title for my modest talents. At Constance I had only a few books and no collection of poetry in which I could find words to set to music. I had in the past written a few couplets for my brother, and I tried to write some verses, but I soon tired of the difficulty of finding rhymes and the restraint imposed on me by the metre, so after a few very poor attempts I confined my attention to the music.

I often received letters from Monsieur de Nahuat. He had been well received in England and he was most

anxious to find some means of living near me. The idea of seeing him amid the scenes which surrounded me gave them an added charm. A beautiful place, and the beloved one, what more could be desired? And this was my sole ambition. France had expelled my family for ever. Death was the penalty any of us would pay for setting foot upon the soil of France. This decree had wrung my heart, and even my son, in spite of his extreme youth, had exclaimed with tears running down his cheeks, "What? Can it be, mamma, that we shall never see France again?" I could not pronounce the fatal *no* without showing my emotion. But when once the moment had passed I tried to find elements of consolation in my children's unhappy fate.

I said to myself that it was better for them to be brought up far from the flattery of courtiers, and that, more in touch with human suffering, they could learn to sympathize with it. This proved the case. For instance, my younger son appeared one day without his shoes. He had just given them to a poor little boy, and his tutor who was a few steps away had not had time to see him do it. Well, if he had been surrounded by a royal bodyguard I should not have rejoiced over this sign of his good heart! So I had nothing to regret for them while they were young, but, later, when they reached the age of serving their country, would it be possible for them to do so? The future seemed so gloomy that I dared not think of it. To do so would have shaken the courage with which I faced my present lot and which enabled me to be almost contented with it.

I left Constance in the month of June to see my brother who was staying at a little country place on the lake of Stahrenberg in Bavaria. His handsome, well brought-up children, his wife, so charming in their midst, formed a perfect picture of that domestic happiness which I had longed for but never attained. Monsieur Lavallette, under an assumed name, was in hiding in a little country house about two miles away. My joy at seeing him was equal to my emotion at hearing him describe the adventures which had ended so miraculously. Alas, his wife, to whom he owed

his life, broken by so many emotions, grieved at the death of a son to whom she had just given birth, confined in a narrow prison, the prey of constant fears for her husband's safety, had broken down under such a weight of suffering, and had lost her mind. When at last a tardy justice restored her to liberty, to the world's admiring enthusiasm and to the gratitude of a loving husband, her disordered brain deprived her of the happiness she deserved.

The Queen of Bavaria came to Stahrenberg to visit my sister-in-law. In spite of the prejudice that so many calumnies created against myself and the dislike she was said to have of the French in general, I had every reason to be pleased with her reception of me. It was she who recalled the cordial welcome I had given her in Paris, and I must confess that at this time very few persons remembered the past!

I returned to my lonely home and began to think that I was to be left unmolested in my retreat, and was happy in the thought that Monsieur de Flahaut would come to share it with me. Though I did not expect him immediately, I unconsciously turned my steps in the direction by which he would arrive, and if I saw a man in the distance, my heart beat faster. And yet this longing to see him again was often troubled by all the arguments suggested by my reason. What would the world say to our union? Would it not have the right to condemn me? And I, what happiness could I offer to the man who would share my misfortune? He is framed to shine in society, and he enjoys it. If he follow me now he must renounce everything and devote himself to adversity, and only the most perfect love can replace everything else. After what has happened, how can I believe that I have inspired such a feeling? Perhaps it is a noble rather than a tender sentiment which prompts him to come back to me. I will not allow it. He knows to what a degree I need him, but if he can do without me it is for me to make the sacrifice. And then, to strengthen my resolution, I evoked all the dangers of such a union, I exaggerated them and then lessened them. And in the midst of all these hesitations I received a letter from my husband.

Since leaving France I had had a business correspondence with him which proved that he still meant to remain my master. This letter, on the contrary, announced his wish that we should separate and have our marriage annulled. He asked me to give him his freedom, and begged me to join him in interceding with the Pope and affirming that our marriage had taken place under compulsion. He added that I must remember that when he married me he was really in love with my cousin, Madame Lavallette. The celebrity she had lately acquired no doubt revived his recollection. I leave my readers to divine the state into which this proposal plunged me ! To be free, to be able to marry the one man I had ever loved, to attain at last the domestic bliss I had always longed for. This was to show me too much happiness and to place it too near my grasp for me not to suffer fearfully if I should be obliged to forgo it. But I had my children and my conscience to consider. I could not sacrifice them both. To declare that I had married under constraint would be to perjure myself. Moreover, is not the marriage bond sacred and indissoluble ? Should I believe myself free ? I resolved to dissuade my husband from such a plan and to show him how impossible it was to realize it. The more my desires agreed with his, so much the more I thought of my duty and of my children's interests. I then experienced the cruel agitation of human weakness torn between the promptings of the heart and the mind, and, at the same time, I learned that the only way to win back one's peace of mind is to be true to oneself and to obey only the dictates of conscience, leaving the rest to Providence. So when the Chapter of Constance came in the Pope's name to question me and made me swear on the Gospel to tell the whole truth, I had no hesitation before answering all their questions. At the end of this meeting, which lasted a long while, the Abbé Bertrand came to me and said that an affair of this importance demanded more reflection on my part and at least one meeting of the family in council. He quoted several princesses whose answers on similar occasions had been rehearsed and commented on by an assembly of bishops. I cut short his erudition by assuring him that

all the councils in the world would never persuade me to say what was untrue, and, that, having obeyed only the inspiration of my conscience, I was resigned beforehand to whatever might be decided for me. And really I had a certain merit every time that I questioned the secrets of my heart.

Faithful to the promise that he had lately made me, Monsieur de Flahaut gave me the fullest details of his daily life. It was evident that he had won favour in the eyes of a young girl who was rich, free and full of good qualities and talents. He was touched by her interest in him but his one thought was to come to me and to obtain his passport. Ah ! when we exact the whole truth, we little know for what we are asking ! These confidences wrought up my agitation to the highest pitch. He could be happy away from me and could make a suitable marriage, so that I became an obstacle to his welfare ! What a terrible outlook ! Ought I not to question his heart ? As yet he does not say that he is in love. On the contrary, he assures me of his attachment, but perhaps he deceives himself. This is what we must find out. I wrote bidding him to listen only to his feelings and to think only of his interest. He answered that his dearest wish was to devote his life to me. And yet, while waiting for his passport he made a journey to Scotland to see the young girl who had betrayed her liking for him. I noted every shade. I so dreaded that my heart might lead me astray ! On his return to London he announced that there were new difficulties about the passport, and asked me to obtain one for him from Bavaria. My brother, whom I asked to make the request, answered that a Frenchman must apply to his own government and have his request countersigned by the ambassador of the country in which he wishes to travel. This was the customary procedure and the request was hardly ever refused, but that if after taking these steps Monsieur de Flahaut did not obtain his papers, my brother would see what could be done. I sent this reply to Monsieur de Flahaut and received only renewed expressions of regret, with an assurance that the obstacles still existed, but not a word about renewing his

request in Bavaria. On the contrary, his letter concluded: "My friends here believe I am making a great mistake in leaving just at this time." These few words settled all my doubts. Far from striving to overcome difficulties, he submits to them, so he cannot love me enough for my affection to replace everything else in his life. I saw that our reunion would be a sacrifice that it would be like him to make, but which it would be like me, too, to refuse. Once more he shall owe his happiness to me. My mind was now irrevocably made up since I should be the only sufferer. But where could I hope to find courage to give up the one treasure that remained to me?

There was but one way and that was really to give up what I had loved so long, to implore the help of God and promise Him to renounce for ever the affection which had filled too great a place in my life.

I had been brought up with religious convictions, but worldly discussions had shaken my faith and the death of my son had destroyed my trust. Had I been guilty I should have accepted my loss, but innocent, I dared question that God intervened directly in human affairs. For all that, I still asked Him to spare those who were dear to me, but this was an impulse rather than a conviction. But now I sought help only in religion which, while it inspires us to love our fellow-men, shows us so plainly the path that never leads astray. How necessary is such a guide! And if our passions have sometimes caused us to leave it they also may serve to bring us back.

In my walks along the highroad, I had often met pilgrims coming from France and other distant places, on their way to the famous abbey of Einsiedeln, situated on one of the wildest peaks in Switzerland. I never supposed that prayers offered up in one place could be more efficacious than if uttered with the same faith in another, but I admired the healing belief which makes people undergo fatigue, privation and difficulties of all sorts in order to obtain that inward peace, which cannot be shaken by the torments of the world. I did not dare to hope for so great a benefit, and only said to myself that, in a spot to which so many persons have come seeking relief from their doubts.

might find some balm for mine, and that in such a place there must be learned, enlightened men, free from worldly passions, whose advice would be of help to me, and that if I made my vows of renunciation in a place where God is so especially invoked and honoured I could never fail to keep such a solemn vow

At the end of October, while the weather was still fine, I drove off in my calash accompanied only by a single companion. The country we passed through along the shores of the lake of Zurich is delightful, and as I am always influenced by the sight of a lovely landscape, I felt the calm of gentle melancholy come over me during this part of our journey, but when the mountains rose steep and threatening about us, when the roar of torrents was heard, when the vegetation became sparse and arid, I was dismayed at the thought that I was going to give up the interest of my life, and the only friend who remained to me. So I should now be left alone, utterly alone! I should not even be able to confide to him all that it was costing me to put him from me. Never again should I pour out my feelings into an understanding ear, and it was because I loved so much that I was making this sacrifice.

Night surprised me in the midst of these reflections, and when I left my carriage I was in a very troubled state, which was increased by the intense silence all about me.

A French priest came to meet me carrying a dark lantern. Before conducting me to the apartment which had been prepared for me in the abbey, he showed me the church and the miraculous statue of the Virgin, which attracts those in distress from such distant places. If objects which are held in veneration by even a small number of persons always inspire respect, how much more do those which already, long before our time, witnessed the same conflicts, the same sorrows, the same sacrifices. Every thing filled me with a holy fear and gave a sacred, solemn character to the judgment I was about to accept.

The next day I appeared fearlessly before a judge I had chosen and sought out for myself. It cost me no effort to describe my life and my misfortunes, and with my whole heart I forgave all those who had ever injured me.

But when I was told that the sentiment which had taken too deep a root in my heart was sinful since it had separated me from the only lawful love, that of our Creator, and that I must tear it out with violence, I forgot that I had come to seek strength to do this very thing. Sobs choked me and I fainted. The kindly father, quite upset, left me alone to wait until I should make the sacrifice of my own free will. He was right. After having wept a great deal, I felt my courage rise and I promised God never to love anyone too much but Him, and in Him alone to look for consolation. The venerable priest had throughout been gentle rather than severe. When I was about to leave he said: "Ah, madame, how you have been maligned! Though we live in the wilderness, English newspapers have reached us. They say things about you which I now realize must have been utterly false. Allow me, whenever the opportunity presents itself, to deny such slanders about you. Foreigners often come to our house. Thus I shall have the satisfaction of making amends for an injustice of which I, too, was guilty in my ignorance. I should never have thought that newspapers could invent such untruths."—"My father," I answered, "while I leave you full liberty to say what you like about me, I know that no one will believe you. When political passions run high truth is of very little account!"

On my return home I wrote to Monsieur de Flahaut. I described all the torments that my feeling for him had made me suffer. My peace of mind, my reputation, my happiness all compelled me to give him up. I declared that my decision was irrevocable and my very friendship for him would be grateful if he gave up the thought of joining me.

Oh, human frailty! Even as I wrote these words I still hoped that he would not believe me, that, maybe, he would appear and force me to take back all that I had said! But, however despairing he may have been, he respected the wishes of the woman who had never deceived him!*

It would take too long to enter into particulars of my storm-tossed soul. Anyone can understand that after such violent shocks, time must elapse before the heart can regain its natural state. Our health is affected by such

* See Note p 277

cruel blows I suffered from nervous headaches which often kept me in bed for more than a month at a time, and no doctor could cure them. In truth, my illness sprang from a moral cause and no one was able to supply the remedy I needed, namely, peace of mind. I was still too racked by my sacrifice for me to feel at rest, but my hesitations were at an end. This in itself was a great step forward.

The house I lived in stood on the shores of the lake. The wind beat against it wildly, and terrible hurricanes threatened to tear it from its foundation. This spectacle of nature's violence was too much in keeping with my state of mind for me not to enjoy it. It seemed to symbolize my life. And now that I was come safely into harbour I watched the storm and thought of the calm that would follow. But when winter was followed by the gentle charm of spring, the scenes where I had hoped to be so happy became too dangerous to me. I dared not linger amongst them, and I fled for fear of mourning the illusion which I had cherished there. The necessity of finding something, a distraction for my thoughts, made me attach great importance to the possession of a little plot of ground. The Court of Baden had forbidden the authorities of Constance to allow me to buy anything there. So I turned my eyes towards Switzerland and on my drives I looked for some suitable estate.

The château of Arenenberg, very small, very dilapidated, but placed in a picturesque situation, pleased me. The authorities of the canton of Thurgovia allowed me to buy it, and this was really to their credit, as all the other governments had repulsed me at the request of France, who wanted to send me into Silesia, Moravia or the Crimea. So, far from being allowed to live on the property I had just bought, I thought myself lucky not to be obliged to resell it. The French ambassador intrigued against me, and the Swiss Diet was on the point of being forced to take action, although this would have been a violation of the sovereign rights of the canton of Thurgovia, when I notified the local authorities that to avoid further embarrassment for them I would postpone my residence in Thurgovia.

until more peaceful times. Therefore there was no decree issued either for or against me.

While I had been living at Constance the Grand-Duke of Baden treated me with the greatest possible consideration. His wife (Stéphanie de Beauharnais) had quite captivated him by the superiority of her intellect and the charms of her person. She wished to come to see me, and the Grand-Duke intended to accompany her, but so soon as his intentions became known, the diplomats, alarmed by a visit which they found hard to understand, took action, and instead of the visit I expected I received an officer of the Grand-Duke's household, who informed me that, compelled to yield to the reiterated protests of the French Minister, the Grand-Duke was constrained to tell me that I must not stay any longer in Baden. So I was once more a homeless wanderer, obliged, for all my reluctance, to trouble the different governments about my affairs, and to ask one of them to offer me a refuge. Truly I did not know which way to turn my steps, since all our family were prisoners of the Holy Alliance, and the assent of all the Allies was necessary for me to find a resting-place. And how I needed rest ! I wrote to inform my brother of the turn things had taken. He spoke of it to the King of Bavaria, who offered me the hospitality of his dominions. My brother bought a house for me in Augsbourg, so that this appearance of settling down with the consent of the sovereign should place me in a position of dependence on him alone, and that the Holy Alliance at all events should not feel that they had the right of dictating my fate. And now, living in the same country as my brother, the protection of the King of Bavaria was a real boon to me, and I hastened to accept it.

CHAPTER XXII

CALM AFTER STORM (MAY, 1817-1820)

Augsbourg—Visit to Munich—Journey to Leghorn—The last efforts of Louis—Return to Augsbourg—The Queen's memoirs—De Flahaut's marriage—"Calm after storm."

AUGSBOURG was the town of my choice, because I had been told that there was no social life there. I had retired from the world, and all I wanted was tranquillity and kindness. I found both there. Before settling down in the house I had bought, I went to Munich to see the King.* He possessed the gift most essential to a sovereign, a goodness of heart which does not turn from misfortune, and he received me with the same attentions as he used to shower on me in old days.

Nor were the Queen and the Prince Charles less kind, and the authorities, following the King's example, treated me with the utmost deference, and even the ordinary people seemed anxious to make me forget that I was among strangers.

My long separation from my elder son weighed heavily on me, and his father consented to let him come and spend two months with me. This was a real consolation in the midst of all my sorrow. My husband was very anxious to see our younger son, so I decided to make an excursion into Italy, and I left in June 1818 for the sea bathing at Leghorn.

The widow of Marshal Ney, who happened to be in Italy at the time, came to stay with me. This dear friend gave me all the particulars of the dreadful calamity that had befallen her family, and all her unavailing efforts to save her husband. Everywhere her prayers were repulsed.

* See Note p. 27.



Oil painting by Gerrit

belonging to Prince Napoleon

NAPOLEON-CHARLES PRINCE ROYAL OF HOLIAND

and at the audience which the Duc de Berri granted her he had said, "I am far from being able to make my voice heard in the King's council, dear duchess, and, besides, you must admit that so long as one of those officers remains alive the King's throne is in danger." A few minutes before the execution, the Marshal had embraced his children tenderly, and had forbidden them ever to attempt to avenge his death. He added that he forgave his enemies. When his wife, her voice broken by sobs, spoke to him of the hope she still had in the King's clemency, he replied, "Go and implore him if you like, but as for me, I shall not ask for mercy." She was repulsed everywhere. There was no forgiveness in those days. At last, accompanied by her sister, she reached the Tuileries and entreated everyone to let her see the King. "You cannot see him," replied an officer, "His Majesty is at luncheon, and it might disturb his digestion." Such great misfortunes had given the Duchess an energy of character which she did not naturally possess. Her principal qualities had been her tenderness of heart, her kindness, her gentleness and her frankness. She had all the charm and attraction of a very accomplished person. But now that she had become the sole support of her four boys she rose to the importance of her new duties. Although the outline of my life was known to her, she was ignorant of most of my many sufferings.

No doubt this was why she used her influence to try to bring about a reconciliation between me and my husband, who seemed to desire it. On hearing that I was at Leghorn he had hurried there, taking a lodging close to mine, and taking care that I should be constantly informed of his ardent wish that I should leave Bavaria and settle in Italy.* It was even arranged that, when we had our first interview, my children should come in, throw themselves at our feet, and implore us not to separate any more. Who would have thought that at the very time he was making these efforts to win me back to him, he was printing a book in which he declared that he had been forced into marriage with me? My husband's character had not changed in the least. The reason was clear enough. We can correct a fault, but not a temper which we consider a good quality.

Such defects only increase with time. Distrust of everyone, including oneself, a generosity which gives without belief in gratitude, a severity about trifles even more than about important things, and a consistent contempt of one's neighbour, must estrange people and give us all the grief caused by ingratitude, even if those about us are not ungrateful.

The worry occasioned by my husband's advances, the memory of my former sufferings, and the fear of having to endure them again, made me fall so seriously ill that I believed that I should die.* As soon as I was better, and thought only of getting away, he wanted another interview with me. For the first time in my life I refused his request. He did not want to let me go back to Germany, and I was afraid lest he should take my second son away from me to force me to stay in Italy. I promised to bring the boy often to see him, and to keep for the father of my children all the sentiments that were due to him, adding that, after so much suffering, the best way to forget it was to live apart. I learned later that he had never ceased trying to have our marriage annulled, but that the council of cardinals assembled to examine the case decided there was no reason for our separation.

As for me, I returned to Augsbourg and there at last I found rest. Nothing disturbed the even tenor of my days. I spent all my time in reading. I continued my study of the arts, and as I had no ideas upon politics, and blushed for my ignorance in view of the reputation I had acquired, I sought to improve my mind, and especially to learn to judge things at their proper value. Although living on foreign soil I had never been more entirely in my own country. All the new books, pamphlets and newspapers were sent to me as they appeared. A noble sentiment expressed by a member of any political group made my heart beat faster, and a base one revolted me. I wished every man of our great nation to be great, and when I saw them mean or petty my patriotism was as much hurt as though I were to blame.

I began to be less distressed over all the absurd tales that were told about me. I could do nothing in regard to them, they formed part of a deliberate plan. I ven-

* See Note p. 277



Painting by Count Delaborde

THE ROOM OF QUEEN HORIENSE AT AUGSBURG

my mother's name, which up to this time had been respected, was now the subject of ridiculous anecdotes.* There was even a sorceress who made up a most absurd set of memoirs about her. From time to time a correspondence attributed to her would be produced. The foreigners, too, collected anecdotes that had not even the semblance of common sense.† An intelligent man to whom I spoke one day of my exasperation at finding the attention of the public still occupied with my affairs said: "It cannot be otherwise. It is a result of your position. Do something or do nothing, be appreciated or the reverse, it is all one. So long as people believe that through your antecedents you may be dangerous, you will be feared." The truth of this reasoning had its effect and made me more indifferent to what was said about me.†

I never had thought of writing my memoirs. Only after the Emperor's divorce, when I heard someone blaming my brother for having agreed to it, I realized how difficult it is for truth to spread, and I then dashed off all the details of this event, and went no further.† Madame la Comtesse de Nansouty, an exceedingly clever woman, who was at Aix-la-Chapelle when I was there in 1812, was very anxious that I should write the story of my life. I assured her that I should never have enough patience. "Well then, will you tell it to me," she said, "and I will write it down as we go." The next day she brought me an account of some incidents of my childhood which I had told her. But she showed too much wit: it was not like me. I saw how well she had written it, but I confessed that I did not like to hear myself speak in any voice but my own, and the book still remains at the first page, which she has kept.

Now, in my utter loneliness, my heart and head still full of all my impressions, I have tried to set them down in order. It has not given much trouble. The truth is easy to tell. When one has something to compose anyone has enough talent to relate things as they are. This constant looking back over my past kept up my distress, but as I wrote, the weight of my troubles which had so oppressed me fell from me bit by bit. It seemed to me that I had

* See Note p. 277.

† See Note p. 278.

confided in a friend, and the oblivion which is generally the gift of time has already begun to efface my sorrows.

The usual defect of memoirs is that they do not give a true notion of our place in the world or of our connection with important people. Our vanity always sets us above ourselves, as when, for instance, it attributes to us the pride of having offered advice when, most likely, we can only claim the merit of having followed it.

As for me, who have lived near to the Emperor, I should be far from the truth if I said that I had ever had the smallest influence over him. I truly looked upon myself as his daughter, but I, like everyone else, was so much in awe of him that I rarely ventured to address him unless he spoke first, and my replies were frequently confused. Indeed, he said to me one day, "People tell me that you are clever, I don't know anything about it. I always feel as though you were ten years old. It is the same with Eugène. I have never been able to get used to hearing him argue." And he added, "That is the trouble with the old folk. They can never realize that children grow up and sometimes could actually teach them something."

My mother was the only person I ever saw who was entirely at her ease with the Emperor, the only one who had the slightest influence over him, and that only in trifles.

In my solitude at Augsburg my days were so peaceful and quiet that my health began to improve. In order to live I required an existence free from all sentiment, even that of happiness, which might perhaps have been fatal to me. Henceforth it would suffice if I could recall the past without regret, and close at hand I had the best of consolations, my brother, who often came over from Munich to see me. With such a friend life still has charms.

And then from time to time I received letters from Monsieur de Flahaut, always full of the warmest friendship, the most perfect esteem. He had married the young girl who had given him so cordial a welcome to England. He was happy, and his happiness was dear to me because I felt that it was to some extent due to me.

For a long while I did not know how to seem natural when I wrote to him. Little by little I really became so

through the thought that in him I possessed a true friend who, better than anyone, must understand me, and whose respect would avenge me for all the injustices of the world. The barrier raised between us safeguarded my peace of mind.

All that was left of the romantic side of my nature was the longing to meet with noble sentiments everywhere. Nothing moved me now except tales of heroism, and I was disposed to think that all to whom I attributed a noble soul must be my friends, and that with my experience of life I could not be mistaken, albeit the love of intrigue may be allied with misfortune.

The most delightful of my occupations was the education of my younger son, who spent most of his time with me, while my elder boy was in Italy with his father. My greatest care was to form his character; a man can teach many excellent things, a woman inspires them; her word penetrates more deeply: for as it springs from the heart it goes to the heart.

Here I will stop. I have nothing more to tell. I can look back over my life: the sting has gone out of it. Entirely absorbed in my duty towards my husband I had hoped to find felicity in a happy home. Alas, I was bitterly deceived! I sought refuge in a true affection, believing that to be loved sufficed for happiness, and that a pure and tender attachment would beautify existence. I was mistaken again. Perfection dwells not in the heart of man, and I sought in vain to find it. The world's goodwill seemed for a moment to be a compensation, and that, too, was taken from me. Then I said to myself that I had counted too much on human perfection, henceforth I must do good without looking for a return. Disenchanted in everything I will seek to create my own happiness. I will love my neighbour, I will do good, but without asking a return: I have relied too much upon my fellows. Sorrow and distress will always draw me to them, and if I can soothe them I shall say: here is the true happiness which no one can take from me. Thus I believe that I have found the real way of peace, and I face the future with serenity. Lonely though I am, exiled from my country, lamenting

the dreary fate of the benefactor of my family, I often say to myself, " My life is ended. I have no fear of passions I have conquered them Nor do I fear misfortune I have endured it." And if I have found that which calms us and makes us better, what is there that I can desire for myself? Only this, that I may live a little longer in the memory of my dear compatriots, in the heart of my friends, and, when my hour strikes, die in the arms of my children This is my last wish

HORTENSE

Augsbourg, 1820

APPENDIX

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS WRITTEN BY NAPOLEON I TO QUEEN HORTENSE

(Continued from page 261 of Volume I)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS. ILLNESS OF PRINCE NAPOLEON-LOUIS

Here is the reply to a letter in which Hortense sends her best wishes to the Emperor for his birthday (fête).

MY DAUGHTER,

I have just received your letter. I appreciate all the feelings you express, and I thank you for them. Never doubt my affection.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.¹

Saint-Cloud, August 17th, 1811.

In the course of the summer of 1812, while Hortense, accompanied by her two sons, was taking the waters of Aix-la-Chapelle, the elder boy, Prince Napoléon-Louis, fell ill with scarlet fever (July 7th). The child's life was in danger for several days. It is to this incident that the following letters refer :

MY DAUGHTER,

I was sorry to hear by your letter of the 11th that Napoleon was ill, and I was pleased to learn by the one of the 14th that he was out of danger. I had counted on this prompt recovery, knowing how much a mother has a tendency to be unduly alarmed.

Your affectionate father,

NAPOLEON.²

at Witepsk, July 29th, 1812.

¹ Original signed

² Original signed.

MY DAUGHTER,

I thank you for the letter you wrote me for my birthday. I was delighted to hear that Napoleon is entirely convalescent. I hope that by this time he has completely recovered.

You know my sentiments towards you. Never doubt my affection, and the interest I take in your children.

Your very affectionate father,

NAPOLEON

Smolensk August 20th 1812

AFTER THE FIRST ABDICATION

The Queen in her Memoirs has described at length her tribulations during the disasters of 1814. Having left Paris on March 29th, and stopped at Glatigny, Trianon, Rambouillet, Loue, she rejoined Joséphine at Navarre on April 1st. On April 15th she returned to Rambouillet, where the Empress Marie-Louise received her, but did not urge her to stay. It was there she received this letter.

MY SISTER

I received a letter from you dated April 9th. I have received a second from Rambouillet the 16th. I thank you for the visit you paid the Empress and for the sentiments you expressed for me. Let me know what becomes of you and have news of you from time to time and believe in my constant regard for you.

Your affectionate brother

NAPOLEON

Fontainebleau, April 17th 1814

P.S.—Please give many messages from me to the Empress Joséphine

THE HUNDRED DAYS

We know that at the time of Joseph's death and the flight of Hortense and Eugène wrote to the Emperor to break the news.

TO THE PRINCESS HORTENSE.

MY SISTER,

According to the decision of the family council of [date left blank] I authorize you to live apart from your husband.

Your affectionate brother

NAPOLEON¹

Paris June 10th, 1815

Then followed Malmaison, the "Bellerophon," Saint Helena, and finally Napoleon's death, May 5th, 1821. It appears that Hortense only wrote to the Emperor once during the living death of these six years.

In 1821, when the faithful Planat was about to leave for the lonely rock, she gave him a letter for Napoleon dated Arenenberg, June 18th, 1821. In it, she enquired if he had received a box with a portrait of Joséphine on the cover, which she had sent him two years before. She added, speaking of her mother, "If she were still alive her one regret would have been to have shared only your Majesty's successes."

When Hortense was writing these words, the body of the Emperor was already lying at rest in the Valley of the Gervans at Saint-Helena.

¹ Original signed. The archives of Prince Napoleon contain a letter identical with the above, except the word "sister" is replaced by "wife" and "brother" and "wife" by "husband."

NOTES

CHAPTER XI

(Pages 13—44)

Page 13, line 15 The Queen travelling under the name of Madame Durougsky was at Lausanne, July 26th She arrived at Sécheron, a hamlet in the parish of Petit Sacconex about one kilometre north of Geneva, the following day

Page 14, line 27. M Heutsch, a banker of Geneva, was subsequently very useful to Hortense in forwarding her correspondence in the days of her exile

Page 17, line 4 Hortense had rejoined her mother at Geneva on September 21st

Page 22, line 15 *Senatus-Consulte* of December 13th, 1810, Louis received an income of 500,000 francs annually from the forests of Montmorency, Chantilly, Ermenonville, l'Isle Adam, Coye, Pontarmé and Lys, 500,000 francs from the estates situated in Bouches-du-Rhône, and a million from the general funds of the Treasury

Page 22, line 18. By a decision taken at the Palace of Saint-Cloud, July 20th, 1810, the Emperor granted the Queen the use of the palace of the Rue Cerutti, and the château of Saint-Leu, plus 1,750,000 frs income Of this sum 1,000,000 was to keep up her household, 500,000 for that of the Grand Duc de Berg and 250,000 for that of Prince Charles-Louis-Napoléon By another decree given at the Tuileries, December 26th, 1810, the Emperor granted Hortense 500,000, to be taken from the 2,000,000 allowed to Louis by the *senatus-consulte* of December 13th, 1810 But Louis having, in a letter of December 30th refused this grant, the Emperor by a new decree, April 24th, 1811, turned over the use of the entire amount to Hortense "until King Louis returns to France"

Page 22, line 19. Louis had declined to pay for the purchase of carriages and other expenses incurred at the time of the celebration in honour of Napoleon's wedding Hortense paid them

Page 24, line 18 "I was the first woman in France who had a round table in my Paris drawing-room on which people could work or play games as they do in the country Formerly, a French hostess always placed herself next to the fireplace with the other

ladies forming a circle around her and the gentlemen standing in the centre. Conversation in which each of the guests sought to display his wit, was the only occupation of an evening (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 32 line 29 Contrary to what the Queen says it was a month before the battle of Friedland that the Emperor wrote his letter to Lacépède and his Note on the education of the young girls brought up at Ecouen, from the point of view of religion, arithmetic, writing spelling etc. The organization of the schools at Saint Denis and Ecouen which were each to have six hundred pupils, was established in the imperial decree of March 27th. 1809.

Page 34, line 22 "I shall always regret that common-place fatigue should have prevented me from enjoying every instant of that (*perkangnissscoll* in the original) night. The night was curious in every respect. The women coquettish men sleepy ministers at a house where the Emperor deeply moved all jumbled up together around tables where wine chocolate etc, had been served. At six o'clock, we were informed that as the labour pains had quieted down, we could go home. The desire for sleep had so completely conquered all those noble emotions I have already described that everyone went to bed and did not wake till the cannon went off." (Unpublished letter from Sainte-Anne to d'Estormel, unlabelled)

Page 34 line 24 The King of Rome was born March 20th, 1811 at 9 a.m. according to the *Moniteur*. Other authorities agree with Hortense in specifying 8 a.m.

Page 35 line 35 While awaiting the restoration of Saint Denis the body of my son had been provisionally placed in Notre-Dame. (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 37 line 21 "The first time they met after the Emperor's return from Elba, Napoleon said to Talma in the informal manner which he usually employed Chateaubriand asserts that I gave me lessons how to play the Emperor. I consider this a compliment because at any rate it shows that I act the part fairly well. (J. Hobhouse *Lettres écrites de Paris pendant le dernier règne de Napoléon* Gand Houdin 1817 Vol I page 11)

Page 38 line 24 I often heard the Emperor repeat this sentiment. One day for instance he said to me "What should a man's most desire? — To be loved. I answered quickly — You know nothing about it my daughter he said pinch your ear. If a ruler does good people will know it after his death and then they will praise him, but in order to be obeyed while he is alive he must seem cruel so as to be feared." (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 40 line 13 The costume ball took place on February 23rd 1812 masked ball on February 24th. 1812

Page 41 line 18 Caroline represented France Louise Brown

Page 41 line 19 This dance of the foxes was the event of the evening (Hortense Masson, L. Impératrice Marie Louise)

CHAPTER XII

(Pages 45—82)

Page 45, line 12. "One Sunday, when we were dining at the Tuileries, the Emperor said to me 'Read this little story I have just received' I looked at the paper he handed me and I recognized the handwriting of Madame de Genlis. While the others gathered in a circle around me to hear what I was about to read, I glanced over the paper, and saw that instead of a story, it was an account of the impression produced by a recent measure of the government. I began to read, but the Emperor snatched up the sheets of paper he had given me and exclaimed 'Ah, I have made a mistake' He hurried off to his study from which he returned with another sheet of paper in the same handwriting, which had on it a little tale which I read aloud" (Note by Queen Hortense) "He (Napoleon), had given orders to a number of persons to keep him informed of what was doing in the world of servants, trades-people, officers and so forth. Madame de Genlis, Fievée, Reynaud de Saint-Jean d'Angely, were among his correspondents and were paid for it" (Comte Chaptal *Mes souvenirs sur Napoléon*, Paris, Plon, 1893, in octavo, page 381)

Page 46, line 12 "The Duc d'Abrantès was given the command of the 4th Army Corps because my brother was to stay in Paris. This army corps included all the army of Italy which the Vice-Roi had organized with the greatest care, and which was as well drilled as any of the French troops. My brother received a letter about them, which annoyed him extremely. It appears that Junot [Duc d'Abrantès] having met them near Dresden while they were route-marching, he had there and then put himself at their head. He had made them manoeuvre in spite of the rain and their fatigue, probably in order to judge their skill. But my brother, who loved his troops as though they were his children, said to me 'Did Junot think he was handling a lot of raw recruits? He will see what my troops can do in battle, but why should he tire them out for nothing?'—Eugène shortly after rejoined his corps and took over the command" (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 47, line 7. The Emperor left Saint-Cloud with Marie-Louise, on May 9th, 1812. They arrived at Dresden on May 16th. Napoleon left there on May 29th to rejoin the army.

Page 47, line 19. This fever developed on July 7th and the child's life was in danger for several days.

Page 79 line 23 This double departure took place on April 14th, 1814 in the morning

Page 81 line 26 Monsieur de Bausset, a thoroughly honest man, deeply attached to our dynasty relates naively in his Memoirs, how courageously he attempted to help the Empress to carry out her wish to be taken prisoner. He considers it criminal on the part of the Emperor's brothers to have insisted on carrying out the orders they had received (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 82 line 31 The visit of Francis I of Austria took place on April 16th.

CHAPTER XIII

(Pages 83—110)

Page 85 line 16 Treaty of April 11th, 1813 signed on behalf of the Allies by the Emperors of Russia and Austria, the King of Prussia, the Regent of England and the members of the French Provisional Government.

Page 88 line 27 Monsieur de Talleyrand too clever to take on himself the odium of this convention, had encouraged the arrival of the Comte d'Artois, and it was the latter who had the hardihood to sign a paper by which he surrendered to the enemy with a stroke of his pen, fifty-two fortresses as well as all our fleet and an immense quantity of war material the fruit of the conquests and blood of France. (Note by Queen Hortense)—An allusion to the agreement of April 23rd

Page 89 line 21 Prina, Minister of Finance had been arrested and his body dragged through the streets by the anti-Liberal party in Milan which city consequently fell into the hands of the Austrians without a blow being struck. (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 89 line 33 An allusion to the attempted suicide of Napoleon in the night of April 11th 13th 1814

Page 94 line 21 A ridiculous report had been spread, I was told, that my brother had had himself announced as the Marquis de Beauharnais. This is entirely untrue. In the first place he was not announced when calling on the King and the General Giffingue my brother's aide-de-camp who was on duty that day told me that he had asked for this interview on the part of Prince Eugène and that he did not even know that he was to be so. I was entitled to call myself Marquis de Beauharnais. It is easy to see that the newspapers are animated by a spirit of mischief and out everything that has taken place in the presence of the Emperor.

years. (Note by Queen Hortense) This note only appears on the green manuscript The visit to the Tuileries referred to, took place immediately after Eugène's arrival on May 9th, at 3 p m.

Page 95, line 24 April 20th, 1814 Louis had written Hortense a letter in which he informs her that he intends to bring a suit for a "legal, complete, and perfect separation"

Page 96, line 17 This luncheon took place on May 14th On the same day a Mass was said for the soul of Louis XVI at Notre-Dame

Page 101, line 8. The proposed letters patent referred to the Queen as "Mademoiselle de Beauharnais"

Page 101, line 25 Napoleon found it difficult to forgive the Queen for having accepted this title On his return from Elba he said in reference to the Queen of Holland whom Louis XVIII made Duchesse de Saint-Leu "When one has accepted a family's successes, one should be willing to share their misfortunes" (Chateaubriand, "Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe," edition published by Bire, Vol, IV, page 11)

Page 102, line 28 The Marquis de Rivière and Comte Armand de Polignac, who had been compromised in the conspiracy of Cadoudal to assassinate the Emperor, had been condemned to death Joséphine's intervention procured their pardon Rivière had been confined in the Fort of Joux and Polignac in a mad-house

Page 103, line 18 This refers to the Emperor's two youngest brothers Nicholas Pavlowitch, later Nicholas I, and Michel

Page 103, line 20 Constantin Pavlowitch, elder brother of the two Princes mentioned in previous note He was heir to the throne as successor of Alexander but renounced his right in 1822, in favour of his brother Nicholas

Page 103, line 25 This copy met with adventures The Emperor Alexander, who had hidden it under the cushion of a sofa, forgot it when he left, and it remained unperceived at the Elysée during the sojourn of the Duc de Berry in 1814 and of the Emperor, during the Hundred Days At the time of the second entrance of the Allies into Paris, the Emperor Alexander, who had vainly searched for it everywhere, found it under the cushion where he had placed it in the previous year (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 103, line 36 This dinner took place on May 23rd.

Page 104, line 15 The Queen had the body interred in the Chapel of the Château On the night of August 19th, 1819, the Prince of Condé, had it, together with the body of Charles-Bonaparte, taken to a vault in the Church of Saint-Leu The coffin of King Louis was placed in the same vault on September 29th, 1847, a year after his death, as well as that of his son, Napoléon-Louis, who died at Forl All four now rest in the crypt of the church under the monument which Napoleon III erected to the memory of his father.

Page 104 line 40. Joséphine had taken cold, May 14th, during the day she spent with Alexander at Saint Leu.

Page 107 line 20. Joséphine received the Sacraments of the Church from the Abbé Bertrand, at eleven o'clock, and died at noon.

Page 108 line 6. Eugène and Hortense left at two o'clock for Saint Leu.

Page 108 line 29. Queen Hortense gives the following account of the disposition of the Empress Joséphine's property.

"Monsieur Soulandre and Monsieur Devaux were appointed to settle my mother's estate which (so people said) was a very considerable one. Yet it only consisted of her country place at Malmaison, the château of Navarre which the Emperor had entailed on my brother, her pictures and diamonds, an income of thirty thousand francs in government securities and her property in Martinique. But as she never understood much about money matters, and as she never knew how to say no to any request, she left about three million francs worth of debts. Our business advisers suggested a sale which they declared would be profitable since everyone was anxious to secure some object that had belonged to her. But it was disagreeable to us to think of our mother's personal belongings exposed to the public and knocked down to the highest bidder. My brother and I therefore agreed that these personal belongings should be given to the young ladies who had been her attendants and whom we felt she looked after. Doubtless in benefiting these young ladies we were carrying out her wishes. The income was divided among them to act as dowries when they married. One of them did so at once. The servants were so numerous that in order to dismiss them and give them six months wages we were obliged to borrow two hundred thousand francs. Of all the children my mother had undertaken to educate and care for we only took over those who were in the greatest distress. The servants who had been with her for several years received pensions which we promised to continue. My share of these pensions, including those I was already paying personally in spite of the change in my position, amounted to more than thirty thousand francs annually. My mother's maids of honour and the eunuchs each received a carriage and four horses. Her ladies-in-waiting received shawls and different souvenirs. We were told to buy anything for ourselves. It seemed as though our position was assured. I was to receive an income of four hundred thousand francs and my brother important domains. Our mother had had been to make other people happy but a small weakness had been possible to satisfy everyone! Some people were angry."

My mother had been in the habit of giving out large pensions amounting to between two and three hundred thousand francs. We only kept sixty thousand francs of the money. It was said that people were being treated badly. Those who were only entitled to fifteen hundred francs were asked to demand three thousand. My brother felt that it was not fair. All were well but my mother and also because I could not resist the temptation of the real estate. I never had had the pleasure of seeing diamonds. The newspapers talked of the great sale of

to fifteen millions. We did not consider it worth while to deny these reports especially as the prominent position my mother had occupied for such a long time made such exaggerated figures seem possible. It was true she had been wealthy, but she gave away everything she had, and frequently more besides. People enjoyed exaggerating the extent of her fortune as well as ours in order to contrast the luxury that existed at the Imperial Court, when the latter was at its most dazzling moment, with the so called distress in which the former royal family were supposed to have lived during their exile. The Duchesse d'Angoulême went everywhere without any jewellery, wearing no diamonds or cashmir shawl and seemed very much attached to her little English bonnet. Perhaps this calculated simplicity of appearance seemed to some people to be a sign of her former misfortunes and thereby increased their attachment to her, but there were others who considered it the mark of an entirely foreign education and of that ignorance which these princes may have possessed regarding the customs and habits of the country they had been called upon to rule."

Page 109, line 10 Here are the fantastic terms in which the police bulletin (submitted every morning to the King), informed Louis XVIII of the death of Joséphine "The death of Madame de Beauharnais excites widespread sympathy. This woman was unfailingly gentle, and possessed much charm and attractiveness in manner and in mind. Extremely unhappy during her husband's reign, she sought refuge from his roughness and his neglect in the study of botany. The public was aware of the way in which she strove to rescue Bonaparte's victims and was grateful to her for having thrown herself at his feet to beg for the life of the Duc d'Enghien" (*Archives Nationales A B. XIX, 341, bulletin of May 31st, sheet 32*)

Page 110, last line In order to conform to a condition expressly stipulated in the power of attorney signed by her husband, Hortense only accepted her mother's property with the understanding that she should not be liable for any debts that might exceed the value of her inheritance. The act of settlement of the estate was passed June 22nd, 1816, by Maître André Claude Noël, notary in Paris. It fixed the total amount of assets at the sum of 7,544,105 frs 35 centimes. The amount turned over to Eugène, 3,550,643 frs 50 centimes, that received by Hortense 2,331,987 frs 37 centimes. The sum of 1,661,474 frs 48 centimes was reserved to be used for the payment of outstanding debts.

Hortense's share included 1,335,702 frs 74 of household property. It was divided as follows:

Furniture of Malmaison to the amount of 2,342 frs; musical instruments, 3,450 frs; food supplies at Navarre, 5,174 frs 50; furniture of Prégny, 4,000 frs; part of the picture gallery of Malmaison, 123,522 frs 75; art objects, 22,279 frs 50; pearls, diamonds and precious stones, 955,784 frs 50; silverware, 51,698 frs; vases in chapel, 2,136 frs; enamels, 3,800 frs 50; half of the wardrobe, 86,406 frs 25; half of toilet articles, 9,797 frs; bed and household linen, 13,766 frs 50; crystal and glassware, 1,274 frs 25; wines and liqueurs, 13,615 frs 25; kitchen utensils, 1,540 frs; half the horses, 6,250 frs; half the carriages, 11,375 frs; half harness, 2,292 frs; half the birds and animals in the menagerie, 706 frs 50; half the herd of merruc

sheep 5,402 frs. 50 half the herd of horned cattle at Malmaison, 2,950 frs. half the collections of minerals 2,935 frs. 50 half the objects of natural history 3,702 frs.—Hortense's share was completed by the estate at Chaussée and its dependencies estimated at 519,610 frs. the estate of Prégny 130,000 frs. a part of the sums due to the Empress from her marriage settlement, which fell due at her death, 346,674 frs. 63.

We may note that in her *Memoirs*, the Queen does not mention either Chaussée or Prégny but, as she was writing in 1820 it was perhaps dangerous for her to speak of property still belonging to her in France and she had already sold Prégny.

A further division of several items which had not been divided in the foregoing statement, took place May 15th, 1816. Hortense received 331,500 frs., consisting of 323,246 frs. in 5 per cent. consolidated government bonds and 8,254 frs. in cash which Eugène owed her.

CHAPTER XIV

(Pages 111—131)

Page 111 line 1 Eugène left for Munich June 24th, 1814

Page 115 line 32 People wished to look at my sketch-book, bear with me singing and, but for my mourning I believe they would have asked me to dance (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 117 line 20 The Queen and Mademoiselle Cocheat left the Havre on September 16th and arrived at Saint Louis on the 17th at 9 a.m.

Page 119 line 12 This visit to the Tuilleries took place on Saturday October 2nd before Mass

Page 119, line 21 Elizabeth Harvey widow of Mr Foster was the second wife of William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire. She was born in 1759 and died in Rome March 29th 1814

Page 120 line 9. On the red manuscript the Queen wrote in her own hand another version of her reply which she afterwards wrote out. This read as follows: "For although I never made the remark and though in the past I had showed how much I was proud from elevation in rank to admit it then would I have been worthy of the Emperor to have deigned it was for I have been polite to the King I therefore refused only by a word."

Page 122 line 24 The Queen returned to her house in the Rue de la Harpe on November 16th 1814

Page 124, line 3 The *Journal de Paris*, on January 23rd, 1815, published an article to which the Queen would not reply This same paper published on January 29th another article entitled "*Histoire d'un grand procès entre un roi et une reine pour un petit duc*" The article was signed, A Martainville

Page 124, line 28 The lawyers' pleadings had occupied the sittings of January 7th, 19th, 27th, February 3rd and 10th, 1815 After two postponements, the King's proctor, Monsieur Courtin, summed up his conclusions, which were favourable to the Queen, on February 24th Judgment was given on March 8th

Page 125, line 20. Maubreul was liberated on March 9th, 1815

Page 126, line 38 Mr Bruce subsequently helped to save Monsieur Lavallette (Note by Queen Hortense) Michael Bruce was born in London In 1815, he was twenty-five years of age, and had travelled in Syria with Lady Stanhope As a result of his generous participation in the escape of Lavallette, he was condemned to three months' imprisonment on April 27th, 1816

Page 127, line 2. The person referred to is not Emma Lyons, the mistress of Nelson, who at that time was dying in great poverty at Calais—The Mrs Hamilton of whom Hortense speaks was probably Lady Mary Hamilton, daughter of Alexander Leslie, Earl of Leven Her first husband was Doctor James Walker, her second, Robert Hamilton of Jamaica Born in Edinburgh in 1739, and died at Amsterdam in 1816 A writer of novels, she had two daughters by her first husband, one of whom married Jouy, a member of the French Academy and the other, Elizabeth, married General Baron Thiébaud

Page 129, line 26 At Rambouillet, Marie-Louise handed over to Monsieur Peyrusse, from the funds of the privy purse which she had collected, the sum of 911,000 frs—and not 700,000 frs, as the Queen says—to be given to the Emperor.

Page 130, line 9 The Duc de Broglie, who knew Wellington about this time, has left the following portrait of him "The foundation of his character was essentially English, English of the old stock, with a mind that was simple, direct, solid and cautious, but rigid, hard and rather narrow" (*Souvenirs du feu Duc de Broglie*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1886, in-octavo, Vol I, page 273.)

Page 130, line 19 "An unexpected visit made by Lord Wellington to the Duchesse de Saint-Leu caused some surprise People remarked that he remained with her in her closet for more than an hour and that all the time that he remained in her circle (contrary to his habit which is of extreme hauteur and very grave) he showed the greatest and most respectful deference to the Duchess, and was very attentive to all her guests" (*Bulletin de Police*, Dec 26th, 1814, published by Charles Mauroy in "*Le Curieux*" No 40, page 243)

Page 130, line 36 According to Mademoiselle Cochelet, the diamonds were put in two boxes, one of which was given to Boutiaquine, the other to Girardin

Page 131 last line. The judgment, delivered on March 8th, 1815, by the 6th Chambre du Tribunal Civil de la Seine was based on Article 373 of the Civil Code, and condemned Hortense to hand over her elder son to Louis, within three months.

CHAPTER XV

(Pages 132—154)

Page 132 line 2 Charles, Lord Kinnaird, the famous art collector was born April 5th, 1780. He died December 11th, 1856. In May 1806 he married Lady Olivia Fitzgerald. The Queen is mistaken in the date. March 5th 1815 was a Sunday not a Monday. The news of Napoleon's landing which took place reached Paris by official optical telegraph, on Sunday March 5th.

Page 135 line 16. The house of Fouché Duc d'Otrante in the Faubourg d'Artois (formerly Rue Cerutti) was next to the Queen's but whereas her garden extended as far as the Rue Taitbout, Fouché's did not do so. Since 1848 his house has belonged to the Rothschild family and to-day is at No. 19 Rue d'Artois.

Page 138 line 27. This was a project of Fouché's. In July 1814 he proposed to replace Louis XVIII by the Duc d'Orléans, but it was not till 1815 that he involved the Generals Laffitte and Lefebvre-Desnouettes in the conspiracy.

Page 140 line 4. Lavallette took refuge in the Queen's house on March 14th. His room was in a part of the house facing the street and reserved for the servants.

Page 141 line 35. Louis XVIII left the Tuilleries a little before midnight, on March 19th.

Page 142 line 36. I revenged myself for this injustice in being of service to her mother and sister. (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 144 line 37. Carlotta Gazzani had been made Countess after the latter's coronation as Queen of Italy. In fact she had been the mistress of Napoleon and after his fall she was one of Joséphine's ladies-in-waiting. Her husband was appointed *Receveur Général du Département de l'Ain*.

Page 145 line 18. Near the Pavillon d'Europe on the left of the Bois de St. Cloud.

Page 146, line 23 Fleury de Chaboulon was boasting Opposite a remark similar to this in de Chaboulon's book, Napoleon wrote the following comment "During the nine months, more than a hundred officers visited Elba from France, from Corsica, from Italy"

Page 149, line 1. Admiral Verhuell, who had been in command of the squadron in the Texel since April 7th, 1813 When at the close of that year Holland rebelled against the French domination, he took all his ships into the harbour of Nieuwediep, and afterwards shut himself up in the fort of Lasalle and Morland, and refused to capitulate until after the Emperor's abdication.

Page 152 line 37 In the course of the day the Duke accepted definitely the post the Emperor offered him. The decree appointing him to it is dated March 21st.

CHAPTER XVI

(Pages 155—168)

Page 155, line 12 I scarcely dare to mention an action which, if it really occurred, was infamous It was said that one of my letters was opened and a paragraph interpolated, which spoke unkindly of the Emperor of Russia I venture to assert a thing whose author is unknown to me, but which really was the depth of infamy This letter of mine was falsified and a sentence most unfavourable to the Emperor of Russia inserted Does it seem likely that I, who felt the warmest friendship towards him, would forget what I owed him? (Note by Queen Hortense)—This letter and that addressed to Eugène raised a storm in the Congress and there was a question of arresting the Prince.

Page 158, line 18 By the decree of Lyons (March 12th, 1815), Napoleon had disbanded the Swiss regiments, abolished the old nobility, annulled all nominations to the Legion of Honour made since his abdication, sequestered the property of the Bourbons, and banished those of the émigrés who had returned since his fall On March 13th, he abolished the Upper Chamber On March 25th, after his arrival in Paris, a decree forbade all officers and persons who had been attached to the King's military or civil household to live within thirty leagues of Paris. But these measures were more or less dead letters

Page 158, line 33 This refers to the Dowager Duchess of Orleans, Louise-Adélaïde de Bourbon Penthièvre, widow of Philippe-Egalité, who, having broken her leg, was unable to accompany the Court to Ghent.

Page 158 line 37 Louise-Marie-Thérèse-Mathilde d'Orléans sister of Philippe-Egalité was the wife of Louis-Henri Joseph, Duc de Bourbon, who in 1839 took the title of Prince de Condé and who died at Saint Leu

Page 161 line 7 Joseph arrived in Paris March 23rd As for Jérôme he after many difficulties arrived in Paris on May 27th

Page 161 line 35. Lucien came to Charenton on about April 4th, but returned to Switzerland without having seen the Emperor Joseph, having effected a reconciliation, returned to Paris where he arrived on May 8th.

Page 163 line 7 April 11th This luncheon at Malmaison took place on April 12th before Napoleon moved into the Elysée

Page 164 line 3 The second French edition of Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* was put on sale in Paris, May 1814. It consisted of three in-octavo volumes and was published by Nicol 12 Rue de Seine. Hardly had the first edition been printed when it was seized and destroyed September 24th 1810. On September 27th Madame de Staël had been invited to leave France within forty-eight hours. She had her book reprinted in London 1813, and in Leipzig in 1814

Page 164 line 5 Benjamin Constant had brought out in 1814 a pamphlet entitled *De la liberté des brochures des pamphlets et des journaux considérés sous le rapport de l'intérêt du gouvernement*, Paris. H. Nicole 1814 in octavo.

CHAPTER XVII

(Pages 169—175)

Page 170 line 17 May 1st 1815.

Page 170 line 33 The Queen is mistaken in attributing this to "la dame" Hamilton. It was executed by Madame Guyon Damer and is now in the Museum of Versailles

Page 176 line 10 Ferdinando Quaglia, born at Palermo, 1772, established in Paris since 1805 was the painter of the Empress Joséphine painted in 1814 and now in the Walling collection

Page 176 line 32 June 1st

Page 178 line 22 June 7th.

CHAPTER XVIII

(Pages 179—199)

Page 179, line 15. The Emperor left Paris on Monday, June 12th, at 4 a m.

Page 180, line 4. On June 18th the cannons of the Invalides announced the Victory of Ligny.

Page 180, line 32 Macdonald.

Page 180, last line On the afternoon of June 20th Benjamin Constant read his novel, *Adolphe*, anecdote trouvée dans les papiers d'un inconnu, to the Queen and some friends The book was not published till the end of 1815

Page 181, line 4 It was on the afternoon of June 20th that Joseph received a letter written the day before at Philippeville, in which Napoleon did not conceal the extent of the disaster With this letter was enclosed another for the Cabinet Ministers, which gave fewer details Joseph read this second letter at a meeting of the Cabinet which was held at the Tuileries

Page 181, line 28. The Emperor arrived at the Elysée on June 21st, at 8 a.m.

Page 181, line 31. The Emperor received Joseph and Lucien before attending the Cabinet meeting, which was held at a little after ten.

Page 184, line 3 Jérôme had been wounded on June 16th, when the French troops were trying to take the wood at Bossu

Page 186, line 37. June 25th.

Page 186, line 40 The two princes were concealed in the apartment of Madame Tossier, a hosier of the Boulevard Montmartre

Page 189, line 40. As a matter of fact, Becker arrived at Malmaison on the evening of June 25th

Page 191, line 11. This scene took place on the morning of June 28th. The little boy was Comte Léon, son of Eléonore Dénuelle de la Plaigne, already mentioned Léon had first been confided to the care of Madame Loir, the nurse of Achille Murat In 1812 he was admitted to the boarding-school Hix, 6 rue Matignon, accompanied by the children of Baron de Mauvières, his guardian, who was the father-in-law of the Emperor's secretary, Monsieur Méneval

Page 193, line 2 Madame Walewska The plural used by the Queen is, no doubt, a slip of the pen, for the Countess would hardly have brought with her the son she had had by her marriage with Count Athanase Colonna Walewski, and she had no other child except the future minister of Napoleon III This visit would seem to have taken place on June 28th We may mention once and for all that the Queen's memory regarding dates in this chapter is not so accurate as it might be,

Page 193 line 30 A few days before his death, Napoleon gave this diamond collar to his faithful companion, Comte Marchand. The Emperor gave Hortense in exchange for the collar a three months note for 200,000 francs. The Queen kept the note and claimed payment from the executors who declined to pay more than 80,000 the value estimated in the succession, and agreed to return it to the Queen after Marchand had received that sum from Napoleon's estate.

Page 197 line 2 It is possible that the Queen was mistaken in regard to Flahaut having been charged with this special mission. None of the other persons present at Malmalson mention it and it seems possible she was confusing this with a mission entrusted to Becker and Lavallette.

Page 198 line 9 Another eye-witness speaks of the Emperor as being dressed in brown, and a third says he was wearing a maroon coloured suit.

Page 198 line 16 As a matter of fact, General Charles Lallemand left Paris alone and joined the Emperor at Niort.

Page 198 line 19. The Emperor left Malmalson on Thursday June 29th, a few moments before five in the afternoon.

CHAPTER XIX

(Pages 200—215)

Page 205, line 27 Louis XVIII arrived at Saint Denis on July 6th.

Page 206, line 1 Taking the name of a Russian lady the Queen took an apartment in the Rue Talibout, opposite the door of her garden.

Page 206, line 33. "The Great Alexander is not so marvellous as he was last year. He sees that it is folly to disperse his forces to a people insensible to the advantages of being beaten and governed by Cossacks." (Letters written from Paris during the last reign of Napoleon by J. Hobhouse. Harlow, Chesh. 1811.)

Page 209 line 24 I have found out since that the Allied Government had been informed that there was a plot to murder Louis XVIII and that I was mentioned as the head of this conspiracy. (Note by Queen Hortense.)

Page 209 line 30 Monsieur Decazes, who was very intimate with M. d'Arjuzon sent word to him that he was about to receive this order. M. d'Arjuzon declined to communicate it to me and when finally Monsieur Decazes sent for M. d'Arjuzon to repeat the order to him, I only had a few minutes to get ready to step into my carriage. Perhaps it is true that I was informed that I was not to be allowed to spend the night at the palace. (Note by Queen Hortense.)

Page 209, line 34. The morning of July 17th ; the instructions were that the Queen was to leave within two hours Devaux secured a further delay on condition that the Queen should be out of Paris by nightfall.

Page 210, line 11. It was Madame de Pontécoulant who told this to Monsieur de Marmol. (Note by Queen Hortense)

Page 210, line 31. The Queen left the Rue Cerutti, June 17th, at 9 p.m. Her party was in three carriages She was in the first one with her two children In the second was Monsieur de Marmol and Monsieur de Woyna, the Austrian officer. In the third the nurse of the youngest boy and a maid

Page 213, line 26 The notice posted up was copied word for word from the notice that Monsieur de Vitrolles had printed in the *Monteur*. Neither the original author nor those who copied his text took the trouble to find out whether the people they mentioned as being my intimate friends had ever crossed my threshold. (Note by Queen Hortense)

CHAPTER XX

(Pages 216—232)

Page 219, line 16. The Queen arrived at Aix early in August. Savoy belonged to France at that time, but it was governed by representatives of both France and Italy The Préfet of the Department of Mont-Blanc still lived at Chambéry, but he had with him a Governor-General representing the King of Sardinia.

Page 222, line 6 Hoping to save his crown, Murat had gone over to the Allies in January, 1814, and marched against Eugène, but on Napoleon's return from Elba rejoined the Emperor. Completely defeated near Tolentino in May, he fled to Corsica, whence he returned in September with only 250 men to reconquer his kingdom He was captured in Calabria, tried before a Military Commission and shot, October 13th, 1815

Page 222, line 21 A letter from Monsieur de Flahaut to Madame de Souza, dated Lyons, October, 1815, gives us the key to this mystery. It was published by Lord Kerry, *The First Napoleon*, loc cit, page 252. "I am very unhappy at the turn things have taken with *ma cousine* (Hortense) Several old letters came for me to Aix ; she had them sent on to her and opened them Amongst them was a letter from Mademoiselle M, which upset her terribly and threw her into a nervous fever" A note by Lord Kerry informs us that Mademoiselle M was the famous actress Mademoiselle Mars.

Page 224, line 17 The young prince fell ill at this time and had jaundice.

Page 231 line 30 The Queen dined at midday December 5th, at Aarau. She spent the night at Baden. On the 6th she dined at Zurich and spent the night at Winterthur. Finally on the 7th she dined at Frauenfeld arriving at Constance (Auberge de l'Aigle) that evening. Worn out with fatigue and emotion she so far forgot her dignity as to write the following letter to the Duc d'Richelieu.

Constance Dec. 10th, 1819.

Monsieur le Duc,

On arriving at Constance my first thought is to thank you for the kindness with which you have acceded to my desire to remain here. I hope to find the tranquillity which is the sole object of my ambition, and which I shall be happy to owe to you. I like to think that you have done me more justice than those who have known me from childhood ought to have known how to judge me for to believe me capable of ingratitude and of interfering with things so foreign to my character is not only to do me wrong but also to wound me where I am most sensitive. I still want to believe myself under the protection of the King for I have done no but to forfeit it. But if the spitefulness of the world should still try to injure me I shall trust myself to your enlightened justice. Monsieur le Duc, and I shall feel reassured. The universal esteem in which you are held is a sure guarantee that my confidence could not be better placed. Receive Monsieur le Duc the assurance of

"My kind regards,

HORTENSE, Duchesse de Saint Leu."

CHAPTER XXI

(Pages 233—247)

Page 234 line 4 Shot December 7th, 1815.

Page 235, line 1 The forefathers and descendants of Napoleon Bonaparte his uncles and his aunts his nephews and nieces his brothers, their wives and their descendants, his sisters and their husbands are banished from the kingdom for ever and are bound to leave it within the period of one month under the penalty incurred by the article 91 of the penal Code. (Mém. de Napoléon, January 1816)

Page 235 line 5 Julie de Krüdener the celebrated mystic and prophetess in 1794 had been married at fourteen to the Russian ambassador at Berlin, who divorced her five months later in 1795. In her adventures she found grace in 1800 and devoted herself to good work and to prophecy until her death in 1826.

Page 245, line 36. Monsieur de Flahaut married Miss Margaret Mercer Elphinstone, daughter of Lord Keith, on June 19th, 1817, at Edinburgh. He had shortly before resigned from the French Army. His resignation was accepted, but he re-entered the service in 1830. He was made a peer of France in 1831, and served under the Duc d'Orléans in the army of the North. In 1841 he became Ambassador to Vienna, retiring seven years later. Under the second Empire he was made a senator on December 31st, 1852. He died in the *Palais de la Chancellerie de la Légion d'Honneur* (formerly Hotel Salm, see Chapter I of the Queen's Memoirs), on September 1st, 1870. His private residence in Paris was the handsome house situated on the corner of the Avenue des Champs Elysées and the Rue de la Boétie.

CHAPTER XXII

(Pages 248—254)

Page 248, line 5. Hortense arrived at Munich on May 11th, 1817, and left on the 17th for Augsburg.

Page 249, line 31. In spite of his previous declarations by which he had handed over his landed property to Hortense, Louis sold the mansion in the Rue Cerutti on September 4th, 1815, to John Torlonia, and on the same day he sold the estate of Saint Leu.

Page 249, line 38. See the letter written by Louis, December 20th, 1815, to Caroline, and another to Elisa, October 17th, 1816, published by Mr Ed Wirthheimer. He asks his sisters to declare upon oath, before a notary that, "Louis was in the alternative of yielding to force or emigrating and leaving his country, his profession and his family" at the time of his marriage. He made an attempt of the same kind by writing to Mésangère who, like Caroline and Elisa, refused to fall in with his wishes. A further request to Dalchoux de Sénégua evoked a letter which conclusively proved the innocence of Hortense and of which we have given an extract in Vol I.

Page 250, line 10. The French police were informed of this illness by a letter of September 6th, 1818. See Ernest Daudet *La Police politique*, p 145, and *Correspondance de Madame Campan*, vol II, p 209.

Page 251, line 2. An allusion to "*Les mémoires historiques et secrets de l'Impératrice Joséphine*," par Mlle M A Lemmand. Paris, 1820.

Page 251, line 6. Notably the apocryphal work of J B Regnault-Waren, *Mémoires et correspondance de l'I J*" Paris, 1819. All the letters in this book are fabricated by Regnault-Waren from the first word to the last.

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